Library spaces speak volumes. They reveal the library’s roles, collections, and services, and they convey the library’s commitment to supporting diverse learning styles as well as changing methods of teaching and research. They can be quiet or noisy, formal or informal, compact or spacious, open or restricted, individual or collaborative — providing options that allow students and faculty to find or create the type of surrounding they most need to pursue their academic endeavors.

Over the past several years, the Brown University Library has actively sought to update its spaces and create more welcoming, functional environments. These renovation projects, funded primarily through donor gifts, have ranged in size and scope, but each has addressed an important strategic step in enhancing the Library’s ability to meet the scholarly needs of students and faculty at Brown. Together, these projects have aimed to help Brown’s faculty and students successfully and easily access and interact with information in all its forms.

Following the extraordinary restoration of the John Hay Library in 2014 — which revitalized this historic landmark and greatly expanded the study, research, and exhibition spaces of the Hay’s first floor — work over the past three years has focused on the Rockefeller and Sciences Libraries.

While 2014 saw the opening of the Sorensen Family Reading Room in the Rockefeller Library, this gracious study and computing space had hardly become a reality when plans were put in motion for additional updates to the Rock. Two intertwining projects for the Library’s first floor were initiated shortly afterwards. Together, they dramatically transformed not only the entrance but also the overall experience of the Rock. The first project updated the Rock lobby, café, and circulation desk, refreshing this heavily used area where patrons check out library materials and interact with front-line staff; have social exchanges, individual study, group discussions; enjoy a bite to eat or drink; or just...
take a break. The other project, the Sidney E. Frank Digital Studio, was designed to give scholars immediate, experiential access to digital ideas. The Studio offers a range of high-end collaborative environments equipped with the latest interactive technologies, oversized high definition display screens, advanced software, a large-scale plotter, and a full-color 3D printer, all complemented by the visualization capabilities of the adjacent Patrick Ma Digital Scholarship Lab. A glass wall separates the Digital Studio from the Gordon S. Cohen and Marjorie R. Cohen Lobby, opening up previously blocked sightlines across the entire span of the Rock and revealing grand views of the neighboring John Hay Library and glimpses of George Street.

Most importantly, the Digital Studio’s visibility at the very threshold of the Rock signals that the Brown University Library is no longer just a place for the storage and distribution of knowledge resources. Indeed, the Library is becoming a space—both physical and virtual—for the investigation, production, and consumption of new knowledge.

Today’s increasingly complex and information-laden world requires people who are prepared to ask new questions and create diverse responses imbued with meaning and purpose. It also demands that individuals be capable of communicating in a range of media, including but not limited to print. More than ever, we need critical insights, creative designs, speculative imaginations, and novel methods of comparative, historically informed study to shape both humanistic and scientific modes of inquiry. The digital age offers expanded possibilities for exploring multiple approaches to what constitutes knowledge and what methods offer new possibilities for its production. Emergent practices of scholarly inquiry rely on multimedia modes of argumentation that are both object-based and discursive, that integrate visible and audible digital media with physical objects in experimental production and exhibition spaces, that expand the concept of publication by including interpretive research results flanked by supporting archival documents and data sets, and that involve large-scale collaborations leveraging high-performance network technologies. The Library’s goal is to provide both an environment and a set of services that will support the delivery and encourage the adoption of these new practices. These efforts aim to equip students and faculty to think anew with imagination, manifest their thoughts as creative action, engage in dialogue with the world at large, and bring the richness of scholarly expertise into new and decidedly public forms of knowledge-making and dissemination. In sum, these approaches provide a twenty-first century manifestation of the University’s mission: to serve the community, the nation, and the world by discovering, communicating, and preserving knowledge and understanding in a spirit of free inquiry; and by educating and preparing students to discharge the offices of life with usefulness and reputation.

The Library has actively invested in improving its spaces and services during these past few years. During this time, it has also been conscious of the need to move many less used print materials and items that are now available online to an accessible off-site shelving facility. These deliberate and careful decisions about which items could be removed from on-campus shelving were part of the Library Planning Study developed in 2011. Shifting the location of collections has resulted in freeing up much-needed study and research space, and has aided in the identification of Library spaces that could be used for broader and more intensive programming opportunities for the University as a whole. Over the spring and summer of 2016, six floors of the Sciences Library were repurposed for use by campus partners, including the Language Resource Center, the Sheridan Center, the Writing Center, the Social Science Data Lab, RI Innovative Policy Lab (RIIPL), Computer Science Masters Lab, Humanity Centered Robotics Initiative, and the FirstGen/Low Income Center (FLIC). Throughout the nation, universities have been
There’s No Place Like Space

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experiencing both a resurgence of libraries as safe, comfortable, and “neutral” physical spaces for academic activity, as well as heightened competition for the limited physical space available on campuses. As singular stewards of some of the largest and most centrally located buildings on campus, the Library at Brown will need to continue to be flexible and creative in adapting spaces that best support the academic and research needs of the University.

Meanwhile, it is to our great delight that yet another new Library space has recently opened: the Vincent J. Wernig Graduate Student Reading Room. Much more than a reading room, this new space offers a suite of rooms designed to support the full spectrum of graduate student life — as teachers, students, scholars, writers, and researchers. This vibrant space in the Rock includes its own kitchen, lounge, conference and consultation rooms, as well as high-end technologies, providing a comfortable and welcoming place for graduate students working across the disciplines. Housed purposefully in the Library where students can easily access services, collections, and tools, this new space promotes extended study. It also provides a platform for informal learning and networking so that graduate students may work and learn collaboratively, develop communities of practice, and feel a sense of belonging.

Contrary to the predictions of many who believed that information technology and the Internet would render libraries obsolete, Library usage at Brown has steadily increased over the past several years. In this high-tech era, the Library is reestablishing its importance as a center for scholarship in the lives of faculty and students. As scholarship becomes more interdisciplinary, classrooms more virtual, and content more ubiquitous, Brown will continue to invest in more high-quality library spaces designed for the campus community — to promote peer interaction and collaborative learning, to enable the discovery of the best scholarly content and the creation of new knowledge, and to support the dreams and aspirations of today’s and tomorrow’s students and faculty.
Global engagement has become an increasing part of the work of the Brown University Library. In the past several years, the Library has hosted small international conferences and welcomed visiting international scholars here on campus. It has also reached beyond its own walls, sending librarians to meet publishers and book distributors in their home countries. As librarians supporting teaching and research, deep knowledge of and engagement with the disciplinary areas represented at Brown is an essential part of our work. In order to build this expertise, the Brown University Library subsidizes foreign travel for our librarians in area studies. Librarians specializing in Latin America, the Middle East, and East Asia have traveled to acquire difficult to obtain publications, often at very favorable prices, and to learn some of the ins and outs of the publishing industries in countries and cultures that may differ from the traditional Euro-centric model. Scholars in their own right, our Area Studies librarians travel not only to build the Library’s collection, but also to expand Brown’s international reputation through conference presentations and research projects.

Latin America
In 2015, Patricia Figueroa, the Library’s Curator of Latin American and Iberian Collections, attended the Feria Internacional del Libro de Guadalajara (FIL). As it is popularly known in Spanish-speaking countries, the FIL is the most important annual publishing event in Ibero-America. Established twenty-nine years ago by the University of Guadalajara, this publishing fair is aimed at professionals and the general public alike. While literature from Latin America and Spain plays a major role, the program also includes activities featuring authors and publishers from across the globe.

While Figueroa doesn’t buy materials at the FIL, she uses these trips to create extensive lists of books that are not otherwise available. Following the fair, she shares these lists with the two Mexican book distributors that work with Brown University: Pedro Esteva Libros (for literature) and Books from Mexico (for history). For Figueroa and other academic librarians, the fair allows them to discover publications that may never be found in book dealers’ catalogs and which have limited distribution outside their native countries. These include quality publications by government agencies often known as “gray literature”; and scholarly publications in art, history, and anthropology created by government-run museums, cultural centers, and municipalities. Featuring scholarship and data — such as census statistics and other data sets not available online — these publications are of great interest and value for students and faculty working in the social sciences and humanities.

Recently, Figueroa received an international travel grant from the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM), and was named the 2016 Association of College and Research Libraries Western European Studies Section/Slavic and East European Section De Gruyter European Librarianship Study Grant recipient. These grants will support travel to Madrid, where Figueroa will conduct research for her project, “Voices from La Movida: Indexing Spain’s Underground Magazines from the Transition Period,” an index of three magazines from the post-Franco transition period.

Asia
Brown University Library’s Curator of the East Asian Collection, Dr. Li Wang, has recently made several fruitful trips to Asia. In addition to making contacts with book vendors, publishers, and libraries to gain updated information on trends in book publishing and scholarly resources, Wang has also participated in conferences and professional workshops. In June of 2015, he attended the North American Library’s workshop on Chinese film, television, and documentary in Beijing. This workshop included tours of China Central News and Documentary Film Studios,
the wide variety of subject matter available and the changing political forces that impact publishing, film, and music. Works from publishing houses friendly to the Muslim Brotherhood were running overtime during the first couple of years of the Egyptian revolution. When President Mohamed Morsi was ousted from power by General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, however, this quickly changed, leading in some cases to the banning and destruction of publications by the Brotherhood. Collecting these sorts of resources can be facilitated by laying groundwork with used book dealers that acquire materials that might otherwise not become available. But what might be banned in one country of the Arab world can still come to market in another. Given this, the Library has continued to expand our network of vendors across the region to Amman, Jordan and Beirut, Lebanon. Future trips may provide opportunities to extend our reach in areas of growing interest to faculty and students beyond the Arabic speaking Middle East — namely in Turkey and Iran.

International Visitors

In addition to our traveling librarians, the Library has also benefited from a number of foreign guest speakers and visitors. Here is a partial list of recent visitors and the talks that they have presented at the Library:

- May 1, 2014: Jill Walker Rettberg, University of Bergen: "Technologies of the Self"
- May 1, 2014: Scott Rettberg, University of Bergen: "An Emerging Canon? Mapping a Field through Database Visualization"
- March 20, 2015: Martin Paul Eve, University of Lincoln: "Open Access in the Humanities"
- April 16–18, 2015: International Colloquium: "Scholarly Networks and the Emerging Platforms for Humanities Research & Publication" Guests included: Dino Buzzetti, University of Bologna; Fabio...
Sudan’s cultural riches rival those of Egypt, Greece and Rome, but war, famine, displacement and the ravages of time, climate and lack of funds means that the cultural heritage of the country is under severe threat. Recent cultural destruction in Mali in Africa and in the Middle East has led a Sudanese cultural NGO, the Sudanese Association for the Archiving of Knowledge (SUDAAK), to embark on a program of digitisation to guarantee the long-term preservation, integration, authenticity and accessibility of important cultural content in respective concerned national institutions: Digital Sudan. The project addresses some of the main issues related to digitisation, networks and services in the cultural domain. It specifically aims at safeguarding and reinforcing Sudanese cultural heritage through new technologies.
SARAH DYLLA served as the Curatorial Fellow for Exhibitions at Brown University Library from Fall 2014 through Fall 2016 while pursuing a graduate degree in Public Humanities at Brown, which she completed in 2016. For this inaugural fellowship, a partnership with the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage, Sarah collaborated with Library staff and curators to revitalize a Library-wide exhibitions program. In January 2017, Sarah started in the position of Creative Strategist and Special Collections Librarian at the RISD Library. Sarah came to Brown with a background in exhibition and program development for cultural heritage institutions. After receiving her Bachelor of Arts in Art and Architectural History from the University of Virginia in 2009, she worked on numerous digital projects at the University of Virginia’s Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities.

In December 2016, TIFFINI BOWERS was hired as the Library’s first Exhibition Curator. Bowers came to Brown from the California African American Museum (CAAM) where she served as curator in the History & Education Department. An award-winning museum curator with more than 15 years of experience, Bowers received her Master of Arts in History Museum Studies from the Cooperstown Graduate Program (a partnership between the State University of New York College at Oneonta and the New York State Historical Association). Before joining the team at CAAM, she worked with numerous museums, cultural institutions, and entertainment organizations including the Smithsonian Institution, Hermosa Beach Historical Society, Hollywood Black Film Festival, and the Autry/Southwest Museum of the American Indian. In addition to museums and libraries, Bowers is passionate about synchronized swimming, film, and culinary history.

In September 2015, the Library welcomed CHRISTOPHER GEISSLER as the incoming Director of the John Hay Library and Special Collections. Geissler has held two previous positions at Brown, joining first as a Project Archivist in the University Archives, and working more recently as Librarian for American and British Literary and Popular Culture Collections. Prior to working at Brown, Geissler held positions at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute Library in Williamstown, Massachusetts, and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. Geissler holds degrees in American Studies from Yale University (B.A., M.A., M.Phil.) and received his Masters in Library and Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

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Drawn from the Library’s extensive holdings, these exhibitions took on topics from institutional history and the literary canon and its challengers, to warfare, inhumanity, and humanitarian work. Through their interrogation of these broad topics and their public invitation for engagement, the exhibitions developed by the curators also highlighted the Library’s complimentary roles as repository, bridge, and springboard.

Collaborative Interrogations
Exhibitions at the John Hay Library are interactive nodes that bring together scholars, curators, collectors, and community partners. In the past year, the Library has been able to work collaboratively with individuals and programs on campus, peer institutions in Providence, organizations throughout the United States, and even international museums in pursuit of exhibitions and research.

One recent project that demonstrates this collaborative energy is an exhibition of a collection of paintings by Stephen Mopope. A Native American artist and member of the Kiowa Five, Mopope’s gouache paintings in the collection depict traditional Native ceremonial practices. This past year, seven of his works were restored, fully cataloged, and exhibited in the Library to celebrate Indigenous People’s Day. This small-scale exhibition of Mopope’s works served as a precursor to a larger examination of Native American representations in the Library’s collections. This upcoming exhibition, planned for Fall 2017, will draw on expertise across the University, and is a collaboration between the Curator for American Historical Collections, Holly Snyder, and graduate students in the American Studies PhD program.

New Paths to Interaction
In the fall of 2016, students enrolled in an upper-level American Studies course titled “Museum Collecting and Collections” began working on an exhibition with the John Hay Library. Led by Brown faculty member Steven Lubar, Professor of American Studies and
History of Art and Architecture, the students worked to develop the exhibition, *A Thousand Little Colored Windows*. Based on the Library’s extensive collection of postage stamps, the exhibition included both a physical display and an interactive digital component that highlighted interpretive approaches to stamps, philately, and postal history. Divided into broad units — Definition, Communication, Art, Politics, Charity, and Collection — the students proposed new paths to interaction with this important though underutilized collection.

Students tackled the inherent challenges of displaying these diminutive works of art through a range of iterative tactics that included customizations to the physical installation, the presentation of enlarged details, and the use of a digital gallery displaying more than six hundred stamps. Working with students from the Department of Computer Science, the exhibition team customized the Brown-developed Touch Art Gallery (TAG) app to provide an appropriate interface for viewing stamps. Installed on a touch-screen computer in the Hay’s gallery, the TAG interface also allowed visitors to go deeper — to search across collections, view high-resolution images of individual stamps, and follow curated tours. The TAG system even enabled visitors to listen to a collection of miniature vinyl records that were issued as stamps by the kingdom of Bhutan in the 1970s. Each of these tiny records includes a brief narrative about the nation’s history, a traditional folk song, and the Bhutanese national anthem.

Although stamps are often seen as reinforcing state authority through their selection of imagery and figures, this exhibition drew attention to the representation of twentieth-century political movements on postage stamps. One particularly compelling example includes a set of stamps produced by the Republic of the Congo immediately following its liberation from Belgium in 1960. The original stamps depicted flora and fauna of the region, and were produced by the colonial government. In a deceptively simple act of independence, the new Republic of the Congo printed over the original stamps, marking them with its new national identity. This small segment of the larger stamp exhibition generated a student-led research project on decolonization in Africa. It also opened up new possible areas of growth, as the Library’s aims to expand collections in alignment with teaching and research interests on campus.

**Shared Histories**

Two other exhibitions developed at the Hay this past year revealed alternative models of community engagement, and drew on expertise across the University. In these projects, the Library became a hub for discourse, critical engagement, and the interrogation of shared histories. Bracketing the 2016 spring semester, these exhibitions confronted problematic histories, presenting narratives and artifacts that documented American slavery and the Vietnam War.

*Vestiges of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, on view from January through March, was the result of a critical partnership between the Library, Brown’s Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, and the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool. The exhibition centered on a particularly loaded and evocative object: a pair of slave shackles on loan from the International Slavery Museum. Working with Anthony Bogues, Director of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, the curators selected contemporaneous texts — poetry by an enslaved man, abolitionist tracts, and other artifacts relating to slavery and its abolition — to serve as context, counterweight, and critique of the inhumane shackles on display. Visited by classes at Brown, students from a host of other local schools, and a broad public audience, the exhibition created a space for both silent contemplation and candid discussions about this appalling part of America’s history.
The second exhibition, *The Vietnam War: Our Veterans’ Stories*, evolved from an ongoing project to capture the voices of Brown alumni who served in this decades-long conflict. Installed just before Commencement, the exhibition illustrated the experiences of alumni as they moved from the classroom to the war and back home again. The contents of the exhibition were drawn from the Vietnam Veterans Archive — an ongoing project initiated by David Taylor, a 1966 graduate and Captain in the U.S. Marines between 1966–1971, and Beth Taylor, the co-director of Brown’s Nonfiction Writing Program. The exhibition included photographs, clothes, documents, correspondence, and memorabilia from Brown veterans. During Commencement Weekend, the Library welcomed some of these alumni veterans to share their stories to a packed audience in the Willis Reading Room in the Hay. At this culminating event, John Rowan, President of the Vietnam Veterans of America, presented the University with a watch and knife from U.S. Marine Lieutenant John Brooks Sherman, Class of 1962. Like the other personal effects on display, this addition to Brown’s collection reflects collaborative efforts to restore institutional memory, face the past, and preserve our shared histories.

**The Past in the Present**
Collecting, in many ways, is focused on the past. While the special collections at the Brown University Library are anchored in history, it is central to the goals of the Library to activate and leverage collection materials so that they may have an impact on the present and future. By creating meaningful opportunities for diverse constituencies to engage with Library resources, we aim to maximize access, reveal hidden gems, and propose new historical narratives and interpretations. Through exhibitions, the Library develops and strengthens its networks; encourages research, scholarship, and collaboration; engages collection strengths and reimagines use; and fulfills the mandate to present and preserve many forms of knowledge.

**Exhibitions 2014 – 2016**
- Elements of Tradition and Change: Brown University’s First 250 Years
- Pop-Up Culture: Juxtapositions from the John Hay Library
- The Unicorn Found: Science, Literature, and the Arts
- Waterloo 1815: A Bicentennial Exhibition
- Influence of Anxiety: Lovecraft, Bloch, Barlow, et al.
- Thousands of Little Colored Windows: Brown University’s Stamp Collections
- The Vietnam War: Our Veterans’ Stories
- Alan Boegehold, 1927 – 2015: A Memorial Exhibition
- The Golden Age of British Theatre Caricature (Loan exhibition)
- Poetry from the Age of Mass Incarceration
- Vestiges of the Transatlantic Slave Trade (Loan exhibition)
- Shakespeare Plays in Rhode Island
- A Hymn for the Brave: The Sharps and Humanitarian Work in World War II
This new digital publishing initiative builds on a strong history of digital innovation by the University and its faculty. Since the mid-1960s, faculty members at Brown have carried out pioneering work in computational linguistics, hypertext, hypermedia, electronic writing, CAVE-writing, visualization, and the encoding of early printed texts. These seminal projects helped inform new approaches to interdisciplinary scholarship and cultural theory both at the University and throughout the academy. In recent years, the evolution of digital technologies, the growth of faculty and student interest, and a changing academic landscape have catalyzed the creation of the Center for Digital Scholarship (CDS) within the Brown University Library. This center is comprised of experts in digital humanities, data management, digitization, visualization, geographical information systems (GIS), and web development. Collaborating with the Brown community on digital projects of various sizes and scopes since its formation, CDS is well prepared to serve as a key partner in the digital publishing initiative.

The Mellon-funded initiative has also grown the Library’s staff to bring in expertise in digital publication design and editorial work, and promotes reaching out across campus to build connections with academic departments, faculty members, and administrators. Through these collective conversations on campus, the Dean of the Faculty has made recommendations to humanities departments about how they might evaluate digital scholarship projects during tenure and promotion processes. Hearing from experts working in publishing, digital humanities, and library leadership from institutions across the nation through a series of invited speakers.
The second project traces a history of today’s virtual reality by examining objects from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Authored by Brown’s Massimo Riva (Royce Family Professor of Teaching Excellence and Professor of Italian Studies), *Italian Shadows: Casanova’s Polemoscope and Other Tales of Imaginary and Forgotten Media* looks closely at visual technologies from that era — including the polemoscope, the *Mondo Novo*, the *Aggrescopius*, and the moving panorama. Riva’s publication will draw parallels between these antiquated visual spectacles used for virtual travel, surveillance, and popular entertainment and today’s digital universe. Each of the publication’s main sections will begin with an interactive, immersive digital experience that will help contemporary readers understand the world through eighteenth- and nineteenth-century eyes.

Over the next several years, the Library will continue its work with these faculty members to develop their ideas into dynamic, exemplary digital publications. As the digital publishing initiative continues to grow at Brown, we will begin work on more faculty-driven publishing projects, continue conversations on campus about digital work and its merits within the academy, and move towards a better institutional understanding of the expanded field of publishing in the digital era.
While the Library had high ambitions for the potential uses of the Digital Studio, the Brown community has already exceeded these expectations by using the space in previously unimagined ways. Whether working on class projects or experimenting on their own, students can make use of the technologies in the makerspace to create professional-grade recordings, digital models, data visualizations, and 3D objects. Student groups have been taking advantage of the Studio’s flexible workspaces and meeting rooms, producing content and employing the capabilities of the Studio in creative ways. A student-run storytelling podcast called Now Here This has been using the audio-visual recording and editing suite to record and produce segments for their program. The Brown/RISD Game Developers group—a student group that develops video games and promotes game-related teaching at Brown—has used the space frequently to host development sessions. Recently, a cellist used the audio-visual suite to record a performance synchronized with images. Brown’s STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) Group has used the space for Google Cardboard development workshops. And recently, a student project visualizing the Sistine Chapel’s iconic ceiling through stitched together images gathered from social media was rendered on the full-color 3D printer. As a space designed around collaboration and exploration, the Digital Studio continues to be a flexible and evolving space.
Fellowship Programs at Brown University Library Special Collections

In its efforts to expand research opportunities and engage scholars, the Brown University Library now supports three fellowship programs for individuals using the Library’s special collections. The S. T. Joshi Endowed Research Fellowship, funded by the Aeroflex Foundation and Hippocampus Press, is intended to promote scholarly research using the world-renowned resources on H. P. Lovecraft and his circle. Funds from the Anne S. K. Brown Committee of Management support selected scholarly projects using the extensive holdings of the Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection. The Library also participates in the New England Regional Fellowship Consortium (NERFC), a collaboration of twenty-two regional cultural heritage institutions funding scholarly research across the collections. Since 2014, the Library has supported six NERFC fellows.

Over the past two years, the Library has provided financial support for research into diverse subjects, ranging from seventeenth-century military uniforms and Cold War era anti-nuclear activism, to H. P. Lovecraft and his literary influence. Scholars at all stages of their careers have found support for research using the Library’s remarkable collections including the Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, the Harris Collection of American Poetry and Plays, the Miller Collection of Wit and Humor, the Hall-Hoag Collection of Dissenting and Extremist Propaganda, the William Henry Hoffman Collection on Napoleon I, and the Brown University Archives.
The Brown University Library offers two prizes to students each year: the Undergraduate Prize for Excellence in Library Research and the Library Innovation Prize.

The Undergraduate Prize for Excellence in Library Research has been awarded for over ten years and is funded by a generous donation from Library Advisory Council Member Douglas Squires ’73. Each year the Library offers prizes for undergraduate papers that demonstrate exceptional sophistication and originality in research, partnering with the Dean of the College to review and select the winning papers. This past year, the Library gave a single prize to a work of creative nonfiction by Beatrice Senocak ’15. Her text, “A Providence Affair,” used the neighborhood surrounding Brown to detail the 1840s-era romance between Sarah Whitman and Edgar Allan Poe.

The Library Innovation Prize was established to encourage innovative uses of Library data, space, or resources. In 2015, the prize was awarded to Andrew Beers ’15, whose “Grand Banks Iceberg Mapper” used data from the U.S. Coast Guard and early maritime newspaper accounts to plot the location of icebergs in the western North Atlantic from the sinking of the Titanic to the present day. In 2016, the prize was awarded to Emma Gleeman ’15 for her collaborative storytelling game titled “Ruckus at the Rock.”
A staff member at the Library since April 2012, Mark Baumer was most recently a Senior Library Specialist for Web Content, enhancing the Library’s web projects and social media accounts with his skill, creativity, and artistic vision. He was a curious and innovative thinker, and was devoted to the University and his work in the Library. Mark was also a Library union steward, and was engaged in personal activism. In October 2016, Mark took a leave of absence to walk barefoot across the U.S. to protest climate change and raise money for the FANG (Fighting Against Natural Gas) Collective. His “Barefoot Across America” initiative was supported by a Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Fellowship Award in Poetry. On his website notgoingtomakeit.com, Mark chronicled his experiences with characteristic incisiveness, wit, and beauty. It was on January 21, 2017, while walking on US 90 in Crestview, Florida, that Mark was tragically struck and killed by a passing car. He is survived by his parents, Mary Tarazewich Baumer and Jim Baumer.

In 2011, Mark completed his MFA in Literary Arts at Brown. In addition to the “Barefoot Across America” posts, Mark’s works include books and other writings, which can be found on his website thebaumer.com. In his most recent book, I Am a Road, Mark documents his first trip walking across America in 2010. Mark was a thoughtful and kind person, a generous and dedicated colleague, and a good friend. He will be profoundly missed at the Library and at Brown. We will remember Mark through shared stories and through the exceptional writings and images he leaves behind.

Funding provided by the Richard and Edna Salomon Publications Fund