Say You Want a Renovation?

The Leonard Lief Library is named for Lehman College’s founding President, Leonard Lief. In a bittersweet moment, Dr. Lief passed away on my first day at the job in August 2007. As a result, one of my first actions was to brand this Library both internally and externally as Leonard Lief Library (it was most frequently referred to as Lehman College Library). Dr. Lief and his wife had donated their personal library to the collection. During the naming ceremony that preceded my arrival, he had also remarked, poignantly, that naming this Library for him was the highest honor imaginable.

A Brutalist masterpiece, this library building – which we have grown to love – is for better or worse a product of its own time. One has to develop affection for its rough building materials and cinderblock walls – but we’re grateful every single day that the architects had the foresight to conceive of an edifice surrounded by windows, flooded with natural light, out of step with the bunker mentality of the energy crisis. On the other hand, we look at the ceiling panels and light fixtures and wonder, What were they thinking?

The Library only experienced one major renovation in its nearly 40-year history. Construction of the third floor Education Library in 2006 brought us the illustrious Treehouse Conference Room (which I got to name) that we consider the most beautiful space on campus, as well as the College’s intellectual center.

Admittedly, we approached the concept of redesigning the first floor and Concourse level of this building with excitement and trepidation. Acknowledging with humility that we were about to conceive a Library for the next three decades of the 21st century, we knew we had to get it right. Primarily, we had to have the user experience of our patrons in mind to conceptualize a friendly, welcoming space with fluid access to services and technology, as well as ample opportunities for individual and group study. A student Space Survey was extremely helpful in identifying student needs, priorities (comfortable seating, plentiful electrical outlets), and desires.

Negotiating with architects is a fascinating process. The enlightened ones we partnered with conducted extensive discussions with us to learn how the space is presently used – as well as brainstorm some inevitable disruptions and inconvenience as we temporarily house operations in more contained spaces, we can’t wait to invite you to visit and avail yourself of our reinvigorated, state-of-the-art physical plant sometime in the near future.

Kenneth Schlesinger, Chief Librarian
Preparing the Library for Renovation

Renovating the Library’s first floor is a long-awaited project that required careful study and evaluation of use of library spaces and collections. This planning process started approximately three years ago. Here is a look behind the scenes at how the Library approached this complex and essential preparation.

Preparing Collections

Preparing for the renovation gave us the opportunity to review library materials, pare them down, and organize them. Elements included Government Documents, Microfilm, Reference collections, as well as materials within individual library faculty offices. Beyond the renovation, evaluating collections has many other benefits. Most importantly, the Library must always answer this question: Do materials we maintain onsite serve the best interests of our students and faculty?

With these goals in mind, we trimmed the Reference book collection by more than half. Subject librarians reviewed titles in their field using the Library’s Collection Development and Weeding Policy. Books unique to Lehman or CUNY were retained, as well as volumes in subject areas of primary importance to the Lehman curriculum. In order to free up student work space, we relocated many reference books to their subject areas in the circulating book collections on the second and third floors.

Current Government Documents are primarily received electronically and cataloged in OneSearch, the library catalog and discovery search tool. For this reason, Government Documents Librarian Rebecca Arzola reduced print documents to keep items only of high interest, important for historical research, and not available online.

The Library’s Microfilm collection was evaluated to eliminate duplication with periodicals available full-text in online databases. Each title was checked to make certain journals are complete with images in online versions. Periodicals Librarian Ed Wallace worked hard to reduce the collection by half, keep necessary microfilm, shifting the entire collection to a smaller space. The Library’s Microfilm collection serves Lehman and other libraries worldwide through Interlibrary Loan.

Periodicals in bound volumes were managed by comparing our holdings with JSTOR, a database with journals in PDF format going back many years. Our large periodical collection then had to be moved to shelves on the opposite side of the Periodicals Room on the Concourse level to create space for student study tables in what is now the Circulation and Reference Room. This move required extensive coordination with Buildings and Grounds staff and the Library’s Stacks Services staff. This complex project took several months to complete.
Planning User Spaces

We endeavored to redesign the Computer Lab, Reference and Circulation-Reserve areas to best serve students during this transition period. In the Computer Lab, this planning considered access to the Help Desk, scanners, printers, and photocopiers. Desks were laid out with printers at each end, so that students would have a short walk to retrieve their documents. Help Desk service was moved to the Computer Lab, so response time for questions could be immediate.

Efforts were made to match customary Circulation and Reserve Desk service, so students can easily borrow textbooks and books before leaving the Library. Classroom entrances were carefully considered to facilitate easy access without disturbing instruction in the other classroom. We added additional carrels on the second and third floors to provide more work spaces. Our hope is that designs replicate or enhance spaces to make functions appear similar to those that students are accustomed to.

All design considerations were made in consultation with the Renovation Team: Madeline Cohen and Alison Lehner-Quam; Library Technology Manager Raymond Diaz; and Enkeleda Tota, Project Manager, Campus Planning and Facilities. During the Fall semester, we met weekly to discuss layout of each space and review drawings developed by Tota of all the Library’s public and back office spaces.

In the Reference and Circulation-Reserve Room, we worked to ensure that the Library’s high service standards would be maintained. The central location of the Reference Desk was intentional, so reference support by library faculty is immediately available to students. We guaranteed there would be adequate access to electrical outlets by running a surge strip down the center of each table. Aesthetic considerations were made, including selecting our best oak tables and wooden chairs for students to contribute a calm and consistent visual appeal during this transition.

We used MS Excel to develop a project management plan and support oversight of this complex project. By December 2018, many collections had been weeded and moved to transition spaces. In January, library faculty and staff moved their offices and units so the first floor could be vacated for the renovation.

Many thanks to Building and Grounds and Housekeeping leadership and staff, as well as the Library’s Stacks Services for tireless efforts to ensure all new spaces were ready for occupancy and services at the beginning of the Spring semester.

Madeline Cohen and Alison Lehner-Quam
A Look Back in Time on Campus

Think library at Lehman, and it’s the building we call the Leonard Lief Library. Many may not realize, however, that prior to our current location, six other campus buildings helped provide library space here through the years.

The first “Library” opened on October 3, 1931 while we were still the Bronx campus of Hunter College. Essentially a Study Hall in a third-floor classroom of Gillet Hall – our earliest building – it served the lower freshman class. The need for more space had been anticipated and plans for a five-story administration building had been drawn up earlier by architects Thompson, Holmes, Converse & Myers, and approved. The Library next moved to the first floor of Davis Hall and now served both freshmen and sophomore students. It still had insufficient seating and shelving, and some of the book collection had to be stored in the Old Gym building.

The Great Depression sidelined plans for the newly-approved administration building that would have given the Library more space. After Davis Hall, the library collection moved to Student Hall (now the Music Building), where it remained until the U.S. Navy took over the campus from 1943-1946 for the training of WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service), also known as Women’s Reserves (United States Naval Reserves). The Library, then numbering some 18,000 volumes, was sent back to Hunter College on Park Avenue, only to return to campus after the WAVES, and then the United Nations left campus and classes could resume.

Soon thereafter, the College began offering double sessions day-time and evening. Early on, students were discouraged from using the Hunter downtown Library and had no circulation privileges. For a long time, they were also barred from using the New York Public Research Library on 42nd Street. Many student needs were met with textbooks distributed to them each semester from a room in Gillet Hall.

It was 1960 before the campus had its own distinct Library building adjoining Shuster Hall. Marcel Breuer & Associates created these glass, limestone, and ashlar masonry structures that featured expressive concrete construction. The Library (now Art Gallery) was a two-story building with an open floor seating plan and closed stacks from which books in the basement were requested.

The building’s undulating roof was considered “novel and daring” for the time. However, Professor Emeritus Michael O. Shannon recalls significant problems with sound echoing off the ceiling.

Poor ventilation mandated use of large, often noisy, circulating fans. Glare from the windows could not be filtered in the public area and the building had no air conditioning. Windowless rooms in the basement were used by cataloging and processing staff.

In 1968, we became Lehman College; the library collection numbered 130,000 volumes. Dr. Leonard Lief, our founding President, commissioned architects Pokorny & Todd to create a master plan for campus construction projects that included a new library building. For structural reasons, Breuer’s library could not be expanded vertically and building space was simply insufficient. In the meantime, some space relief was realized when the periodicals collection was moved to Carman Hall in the 1970s.

But there were other problems, the chief being that all Lehman building construction on the east side of campus was halted, including the new Library, which already had steel beams in, due to New York City’s mid-1970s fiscal crisis, echoing the Depression-era delay of a new library building on campus.

In 1980, our present four-story library building opened with much enthusiasm, particularly by those who had labored so long in inadequate space and working conditions. All library materials were finally brought together in the same open stacks building with good light and even much welcomed air conditioning during the summer months. On May 4, 2006, the Library (then holding some 700,000 volumes and 13,000 electronic journals) celebrated the dedication of this building in the name of Leonard Lief, under whose leadership the Library was constructed.

More than a dozen years later, the Leonard Lief Library is now in the process of being renovated by H2M Architecture & Design. The first floor is completely closed, and Reference, Circulation and Reserve operations have been moved to the Concourse level for an anticipated year. The existing Computer Lab has been enlarged.

Janet Munch
**Brutalism in the Northeast**

Revisiting the renovation of Paul Rudolph’s 1963 Yale University Art & Architecture (A&A) building provides context for the Leonard Lief Library recondition project (Foley, 2009). Before looking north to New Haven, CT, however, the Lehman community can look next door to Rudolph’s Mitchell-Lama middle-income housing, Tracey Towers. One element shared by all three buildings is textured concrete (NYC Urbanism). Opinions about the Brutalist style structures lie on either side of a solid wall.

The Bronx Rudolph project has received similar criticism as the A&A design: “While the number of entrances and pathways may be aesthetically pleasing, it has caused confusion among residents and visitors” (NYC Urbanism). However, like the Leonard Lief Library building that opened in 1980, designed by architects Pokorny & Todd, Tracey Towers “residential levels themselves are quite traditional,” featuring rectilinear apartments. As with our Library, solid external elements belie internal pools of light: “the muscularity of the exterior is used to disguise the lightness of the interiors” (Ouroussoff, 2008).

The Atlas of Brutalist Architecture notes that “the desire for a new monumentality in architecture started in the 1940s as a riposte to the clean lines and polite forms of Modernism.” How fitting, then, that at Lehman the Library moved across sight lines from its former Marcel Breuer home, now the Art Gallery.

A 2017 renovation of Rudolph’s Southeastern Massachusetts Technological Institute’s Claire T. Carney Library structure “was clothed within an enormous glass shell,” thus “respecting its design” (McLeod & Churley, 2018, p. 62). The renovation of the Leonard Lief Library does not contend with a prominent architect’s enunciated vision, but rather focuses on revamping the building’s interior spaces to both freshen up worn out materials, as well as address evolving learning styles and technological requirements of students and faculty.

Multiple reviews of the building were unfavorable and a 1969 fire was “of suspicious origin – widely viewed as arson.” The renovation also elicited differing opinions, including one with extreme perspectives from high to low: “the results range from exhilarating to disappointing” (Amelar & Lewis, 2009, though his renovation allows the original “subtlety of the design” to again be seen after the “heartless renovations” after the fire (Ouroussoff, 2008). In the Gwathmey renovation, some modifications had to be made to address modern building codes and energy efficiency, making it “a model restoration” (Amelar & Lewis, 2009).

Perhaps it is the nature of architectural work commissioned with room for artistic expression to bring forth opinions, which by creative vision may either enthral or bring forth negative sentiments. In Rudolph’s words, “The Architect must be uniquely prejudiced. If his work is to ring with conviction, he will be completely committed to his particular way of seeing the universe. It is only then that every man sees his particular truth” (Paul Rudolph Heritage Foundation, Events, 2019).

For those who follow fashion, take note that “Brutalism is back in vogue” (Farago, 2018. More importantly, the A&A’s renovation addressed that building’s “notorious lack of climate control, or even airflow” via modern mechanical systems (Armela & Lewis, 2009). It is in this aspect that form will most recognizably follow function in our renovated space: circulation – improved ventilation of air, greater ease of group work, and a more comfortable environment for the flow of information and ideas.


Labor in the Library

Over the Winter 2019 break when many faculty, staff, and students were away, members of the ten or so trade unions that comprise the College’s Building and Grounds team, along with their supervisors, worked to prepare the Library’s first floor and Concourse for the initial phase of the long-awaited renovation. With work now in the hands of the contractors, staff took some time to discuss the logistics of the complex project they recently completed.

Pasquale Macchia, a laborer at Lehman for 25 years, noted that the project, which involved relocating all the library service points, materials, and staff to other parts of the building, was a collaboration between all the trades on campus.

The DC 37 Local 924 laborers started their work in December, well before Christmas, moving furniture and file cabinets up and down the four floors of the Library, carrying heavily-worn tables, chairs, and other objects to the Library’s loading dock to be discarded. Everything was sorted into material types for recycling. But a good portion of the work began even earlier, according to Jorge Mateus, Lehman’s Administrative Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds (whose salary scale falls under the PSC-CUNY Contract).

For more than a year, library faculty and staff weeded books, made tough decisions about redundant print volumes and old furniture, and readied spaces for eventual relocation. Laborers and custodians followed every decision, making sure the remaining spaces were cleared, cleaned, and in good shape. Maintenance workers would also do their part as needed.

“Maintenance and laborers work a lot with each other,” Teamsters 237 member and maintenance worker Frank Vargas noted. “We take things apart, and they do the swinging and big heavy stuff.” “We work with all of them!” Richard Santapau, a thirteen-year veteran at Lehman (former Library employee) and Principal Supervisor (DC 37 Local 1797) of the custodial staff, added, pointing out that all the work involved tends to create debris and dust with which the custodians must constantly contend.

Terrance Kham and Alejandra Hernandez are two of the many custodial workers (DC 37 Local 1597) who contributed to the effort. Kham, a relative newcomer to Lehman, normally cleans floors, bathrooms, and offices, but found himself doing new things during the pre-renovation phase. One task involved removing adhesive from the concrete subfloor of the Library’s new service area, preparing the floor for a temporary sealant that will eventually again be covered with carpet in Phase Two of the renovation. Hernandez emphasized the amount of dust that was generated and how much dusting and vacuuming she then had to do, often returning to the same spaces multiple times as different parts of the work were completed over time.

The main work maintenance workers undertook involved disassembling several hundred pieces of shelving in various locations and relocating them to their new locations. When reassembling them, each row of shelves would have to be carefully measured to meet ADA accessibility guidelines.

Work proceeded relatively smoothly, but there were some surprises along the way. Deadlines had to be adjusted and moved up at times. One unexpected discovery during the demolition process was a steam pipe found behind a wall in the Library’s Fine Arts area, now the location of our Technical Services unit and other offices. Engineers had to be called in to assess the situation and relocate the pipe so that demolition could continue. Also unanticipated was the volume and weight of the Library’s Microfiche collections.

But the team attained its goal of completing work prior to the start of the Spring 2019 semester. One of the happy accidents that allowed them to meet this deadline was that there was very little snow during December and January. Mateus observed, “Last year we had snow conditions almost every week.” During periods like that, even trash pickup must sometimes be put on hold.

Laborer Mike Pippo pointed out that faculty and staff may not always be aware of all the jobs Buildings and Grounds has to juggle at any one point. “You try to plan what you think is going to go ahead and – all of a sudden – things just change,” requiring laborers and others to be pulled from one job to another at a moment’s notice. More importantly, Mateus noted, “We didn’t have anybody getting hurt,” despite all the heavy demolition, moving heavy cabinets, lighting work, and other tasks that come with risks.

For Terrance Kham, his job is clear: “I just take care of the campus.” It’s an attitude shared by all the workers we talked to, including Mateus. “It’s important for me to come back to my alma mater and do something good for it.”

https://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/lr/labor-orgs/unions.html

Robert Farrell
The Library Book

Susan Orlean. Simon & Schuster, $28
ISBN: 978-1-4767-4018-8
Orlean, staff writer at the New Yorker and author of seven books.

Orlean begins her true tale by briefly introducing us to Harry Peak, an unknown actor whose greatest claim to fame is that he was the sole suspect in the 1986 fire of the Los Angeles Central Library, “destroying almost half a million books and damaging seven hundred thousand more. It was one of the biggest fires in the history of Los Angeles, and it was the single biggest library fire in the history of the United States” (p. 2).

Orlean proceeds to share her own history with libraries and fond memories of visiting her local library with her mother. She shares how later in life, now as a mother herself, she renewed her relationship with libraries when taking her son, a first grader, to the library to interview a librarian – his choice of public servant – for his classroom assignment. Her fond memories came back; these later led to a tour of the Los Angeles Central Library and the comment by her tour guide that some of the books still smelled of smoke. Smoke? Yes, smoke from the Great Fire.

Orlean details the immensity and horror of this stupendous fire which she had not previously known. At the time of the fire, she lived in New York City. But surely a fire of such immensity would have been known throughout the country, if not the world? Well, timing is everything in the news. The Los Angeles Central Library fire occurred mid-morning on April 29, 1986. When Orlean checked the New York Times edition for that day, the paper had already been printed when the fire started. The next day’s papers headlines were not of the L.A. fire but the disaster of Chernobyl. The Times did report the fire but on page A14. How does a library fire, even one as great as the L.A. Central Fire, compare to the possible end of the world because of a nuclear reactor disaster?

Orlean weaves the tale of the fire’s length – it burned for over seven hours; its scope – almost half a million books destroyed and three quarters of a million damaged by smoke and water; and the building, a controversial design built in 1926 by architect Bertram Goodhue that was closed for seven years after the blaze.

She walks us through the Central Library’s history beginning with its opening in 1873, its first few directors, and the surprising hire in 1880 for the third City Librarian, an eighteen year-old woman, Mary Foy, at a time when the profession was predominately male and library patrons were predominately men.

We meet staffers, ranging from those who worked there in 1986 to those presently employed. We learn brief bits of their histories and what led to their working in the Library. We see the expected: staffers, interacting with the public while checking out books; children’s librarians running Story Time Hours; and young adult librarians providing a safe space for teens to hang out and explore not only books, computers, and information, but tough topics like safe and appropriate behavior in dating relationships.

Beyond being a repository of knowledge and information, the Library today provides technology and librarians’ assistance with digital tools and formats. Librarians interact with the homeless and work with social service and community agencies to reach and assist those who often through the cracks.

Orlean walks us through fires throughout library history: the fire of the Library of Alexandria; destruction of libraries and book burning by the Nazis; destruction of the Cambodian National Library, National Library of Sarajevo, libraries in Kabul, Afghanistan, and the Iraqi National Library. She discusses the concept that by destroying books, we are destroying a culture, “sentencing it to something worse than death: It is sentencing it to seem as if it never lived” (p. 103).

The Library Book will bring back memories, as it did for me, of getting my first library card and the exhilarating freedom to take books home for free. It also illustrates the joy and challenges of working in a library today.

Book lovers, library lovers, library haters, and even those indifferent will be fascinated and captivated by this tour provided by Susan Orlean.

Robin Wright
From November 25 - December 2, 2018, I participated in a Library and Information Services Journey to Peru, led by former American Library Association President Dr. Camila Alire. Our group of eight consisted of academic and public library directors and some guests. In addition to sightseeing and cultural immersion, our charge was to visit academic, public, and special libraries in Lima and Cusco to conduct facilitated discussions with our Peruvian library colleagues.

Lima is a bustling, cosmopolitan city of ten million located on the Pacific coast, serving as the country’s commercial center. One-third of the population lives there. Combining restored Colonial buildings with modern architecture, its notorious traffic is reminiscent of Los Angeles. Our first stop was Biblioteca Municipal de Lima (Municipal Library of Peru), located on the main plaza, serving as an archival repository of historical records of the region.

We had the opportunity to have an extended discussion with Maria Emma Mannarelli, Director of the Biblioteca Nacional de Peru (National Library of Peru). The National Library is housed in an open, modern building celebrating the country’s prominent writers. Committed to preserving Peru’s cultural patrimony, the Library contains impressive labs for conservation of historical manuscripts and vintage photographs.

Not only does Sra. Mannarelli oversee the National Library, she is also responsible for the country’s network of public libraries. She spoke candidly about the challenges of maintaining public library service throughout the country, particularly since funding is dependent on the local mayor, who may have other priorities in resource allocation. Even a city as large as Lima only has in her estimation three functioning public library branches.

That afternoon we were able to visit one of these prime examples, the Public Library of Miraflores, considered the most attractive and vibrant in the city. Library Chief Beatriz Prieto gave us a tour, and informed us about their proactive outreach activities including bringing books to senior centers, low-income communities, and even the beach! This stimulated our perceptions about how we could more effectively serve our surrounding communities.

Perhaps the highlight of the trip was our meeting at Pontifical Catholic University (PUCP), an elite private university founded in 1917. We engaged in a lively, interactive discussion with Library Director Kathia Hanza and her unit heads. Not surprisingly, they face similar challenges of U.S. academic libraries: how to most effectively embed library resources within the curriculum; build dynamic collections with limited resources; actively solicit the support of Deans and the Vice Rector. One member of our group, Dean of Libraries at University of Nevada-Las Vegas,
offered to send two of her faculty members to PUCP to advise on assessment and developing persuasive metrics. Through the efforts of Lehman Library webmaster John DeLooper, we were able to advise PUCP how to incorporate LibGuides [Research Guides] into their course management system, a practice we had only recently developed.

El Centro Bartolome de las Casas Pontifical Catholic resides on a beautifully landscaped campus with noteworthy modern architecture. Library colleagues showed us their brand new Engineering Library, an appealing, state-of-the-art edifice facilitating access to multimedia technologies and 3-D printing. Every seat was taken by students working at the end of the semester.

From Lima we ventured to Cusco, the original Incan capital, a gem of Colonial architecture surrounded by the Andes with dazzling, ever-changing light. Cusco is situated at 11,000 feet. Unfortunately, our visit to Universidad San Antonio de Abad was cancelled due to a labor strike. However, we toured El Centro Bartolome de las Casas (CBC Library), a unique special library of 53,000 volumes documenting Andean culture featuring anthropological, cultural, demographic, linguistic, and literary monographs.

We also visited the recently restored Convent of San Francisco de Asis, which has a manuscript library of 18th and 19th century tomes of ecclesiastical history undergoing preservation. And we pursued some leisure activities, including the Larco Museum in Lima, which has an outstanding archeological collection of pre-Columbian artifacts. On our final day, we visited a girls’ orphanage in Cusco, which involved both meaningful interactions and community service. Dining was a consistent pleasure, partaking of Peru’s extensive produce (3,000 kinds of potatoes!), and sampling ceviche, alpaca, octopus, and guinea pig. The Peruvian people, warm and gracious, were wonderful hosts.

No visit to Peru would be complete without a sojourn to Machu Picchu, the sacred ruins of Incan civilization, located within a breathtaking setting. Justifiably one of the seven wonders of the world, this testament to Incan achievements in architecture, agriculture, and astronomy inspires awe, reflection, and sobriety. While the invading Spanish ultimately decimated this advanced community, they nevertheless documented it through their historical journals and narratives, contributing to our knowledge of the legacy of this unique civilization.
Minimizing an Office Space

An upcoming or unexpected event is often the impetus to change one’s environment. Due to a planned library renovation, everyone on the first floor had to move to locations throughout the Library. At the start of the Spring semester, you may have seen library faculty and staff occupying new offices on the Concourse, second and third floors. People have been temporarily moved to smaller and shared office space for perhaps as long as one year. Accordingly, each of us had to scale back items from our offices to adjust to new accommodations. Paring down a space can be stressful and demands time to make discard decisions.

When you have an office in an academic institution or in a library, you may have books, papers, and tchotchkes. Some routinely moderate their work surroundings, creating a space with minimal visual and physical elements—while others choose to work with more property surrounding them. The minimizing process includes identifying certain personal items as keepers, resolving to give others away, and easily relinquishing some to the recycling or garbage bin.

Overall, there can be benefits to minimizing your office space. You can discern what will stay or go: some can either be retrieved online or scanned. Books may be donated to a library, placed in your building’s laundry room, donated to a used bookstore, or placed outside your office for students. A book can always have a second or third life. Items you choose to keep will most likely remain important to you, or provide a service or comfort from having them around.

While it’s already been a few months since the move, a less-cluttered office has supported more focused work, lesson planning, and availability to students. I still must keep on top of things collecting on my desk—minimizing will always be a work in progress.

Becker, J. Operation: Minimalist office complete. [Blog post].

Retrieved from https://www.workzone.com/blog/how-to-organize-your-desk/

Library Space Survey

Frequent users of the Library have probably noticed the many colorful paper surveys we distributed throughout the building last Spring. Among other things, the surveys asked students to tell us about how they were using the Library that day, which area of the Library they were in, what type of furniture they used, and how well library space meets their needs. The survey is part of an ongoing effort by the Library’s Public Services Group to improve and define student spaces.

While we are still inputting surveys (we had over 300 responses during two weeks), we have begun to try to identify trends. Our first takeaway, based on data we’ve processed so far? Students need it all! Specifically, quiet and group workspaces are rated as “important” or “very important” at very high rates by undergraduate Lehman students. Likewise, access to computers is rated very highly by Lehman undergraduates—although, on reflection, we’re don’t know whether this means computer labs, laptop loans, or WiFi access. That will be a question for next time.

The final results of the survey will likely confirm what we suspected: students need a variety of work environments within the Library, and are frustrated when the space they turn to doesn’t meet that need. We also collected a lot of open-ended responses which are yielding even more specific complaints and requests for improvement (burned out lights, dusty upholstery, banging doors).

The end result should help us make both small and large improvements including rezoning the Library to have distinct quiet and group work areas. We may even consider creating new silent study for times when total focus is required. We will also examine whether furniture in each zone is appropriate for the way that space is used.

Thanks again to everyone who completed a survey. Look out for improvements in the Summer and Fall semesters.

Rebecca Arzola

Survey results for undergraduate students

Jennifer Poggiali
Documenting Library Renovations with Instagram

In Spring 2019, the Library began documenting its renovation via the social media platform Instagram. Recognizing that the renovation would cause service changes and disruptions that might confuse students, the Electronic Resources and Web Services Unit sought ways to use the Library’s website to keep students up to date and engaged in the process. Looking for a new direction for the Library’s existing Instagram account, we made the decision to use that social media platform for this purpose.

Instagram renovation post

Instagram was founded in 2012, and has been used in libraries since at least 2013 (Kroski, 2013). Interesting uses of the platform include highlighting new collections, general library news, and being applied in conjunction with library scavenger hunts or documenting library building renovations.

The Library had an Instagram profile prior to this project, but it was underutilized. Michelle Ehrenpreis and John DeLooper revived this social media channel, first by giving it a place of prominence on the Library’s website. This involved updating the “Videos” tab of the Library’s webpage with “Renovation Updates.” New posts began in late December at a rate of approximately two per week. Sample posts include pictures of the new entrance, hours, signage, and Reference, Reserve and Circulating service points. The posts have increased in likes and views. The forum has generated positive feedback from other College departments who maintain their own Instagram channels.

Electronic Resources and Web Services plans to add coverage of library events, services, database trials, and more. We also want to incorporate the Instagram Graph API to automate updates of posts from the Instagram profile of the Library’s website, currently a manual process.

The Instagram feed can be accessed on the Library’s homepage at https://lehman.edu/library/ and via direct link at https://www.instagram.com/leonard_lief_library/


John DeLooper and Michelle Ehrenpreis

Safety: Library and Public Safety Team Up

Lehman College Director of Public Safety Fausto Ramirez sat down with me to discuss the topic of student safety in the Library during the renovation. Most campus members know by now that the Library has closed the first floor and moved that floor’s operations to the Concourse level.

The Library’s entrance has been completely replicated downstairs with a main Security Desk with digital ID verification and an accessible entrance. Public Safety prepared to ensure that the renovation-phase entrance would work for students. This involved improving lighting and syncing of security cameras. Security cameras are a live feed, always monitored by a campus Peace Officer.

When using the Library, students should be aware of their surroundings at all times and take their personal belongings with them when they move about. If students see any suspicious activity in the Library or on campus, they should report it to a staff member, front desk Security Guard, or call x7777 for Campus Police.

Director Ramirez would like to encourage all Lehman students to establish a buddy system when traveling to and from campus, especially at night. Students should try to use the Bedford Park exit Gate 8 to access the 4 and D trains. Students should exercise caution when using the South exit Gate 13 at night. When walking to the parking lots, you should use the Gate 5 exit. Public Safety offers students, faculty, and staff escorts on and off campus to the train station and bus stops. Call 718-960-8228 for a Public Safety escort.

This semester, library faculty and staff attended an A.L.I.C.E. training seminar with Sgt. Samuel Gonzalez, CPO Stevenson Aguilar, and Director Ramirez. A.L.I.C.E. training refers to “alert, lockdown, inform, counter, evacuate strategies” to keep community members safe during a potential active shooter incident. Public Safety and the Library are committed to a safe environment where students can use the Library as a central hub for research, gathering, and information sharing.

Stephen Walker
We were honored to welcome prominent bilingual children’s author Emma Otheguy on April 15th. Co-sponsored by the Library and School of Education, her visit was attended by an overflow crowd of students and faculty from the School of Education’s Early Childhood and Childhood Education Department.

In Otheguy’s bilingual picture book, Martí’s Song for Freedom, about Cuban poet and national hero José Martí, she expertly weaves her own translations of his poems into a moving chronicle of his life. Martí’s Song for Freedom received five starred reviews and was named a Best Book of the Year by Kirkus Reviews, School Library Journal, New York Public Library, and Bank Street College of Education. It also received International Literacy Association’s 2018 Children’s and Young Adult Book Award in Intermediate Nonfiction.

Otheguy’s young adult novel, Silver Meadows Summer, was published in April 2019. In her blurb for the book, author Ruth Behar writes, ‘Emma Otheguy’s exquisitely poetic novel, Silver Meadows Summer, is an absolute joy to read. Summertime becomes a magical season of discovery in her beautifully conjured and unforgettable story of immigration and hope for new beginnings. Every reader will fall in love with Carolina and her tender quest to create a home of the heart in an abandoned cottage in New York’s woodlands after losing homes in both Cuba and Puerto Rico’ (2019).

Otheguy holds a PhD in History from New York University, where she focused on colonial Latin America. She has received fellowships and grants from American Historical Association, Council of Library and Information Resources, and Humanities New York.

Otheguy’s presentation offered many layers by sharing her work, connections to José Martí, and his own experiences in the Catskills. Otheguy presented strategies for educators to create a more inclusive reading environment around children’s books and student identity.

Otheguy addressed the importance of reading aloud daily, offering diverse literature that serves as mirrors, windows, and sliding doors to children’s ways of being, as well as listening to children’s stories. She shared the work of well-known Latinx poets and suggested ways to incorporate them into the classroom. The event concluded with Otheguy reading from Martí’s Song for Freedom.

Otheguy’s visit connects with the research and collection development projects undertaken by Education Librarian Alison Lehner-Quam and Early Childhood and Childhood Education’s Cecilia Espinosa on identity in children’s literature. This includes development of the new Identities Collection located on the Library’s third floor near Room 318. A research guide includes instructions on how to find books from the Collection using the Library’s discovery tool, OneSearch:
http://libguides.lehman.edu/ChildrensBooksThemes/Identity

Martí’s Song for Freedom is now part of the Library’s collection, and Silver Meadows Summer will soon join the Identity Collection.


Alison Lehner-Quam and Cecilia Espinosa
In Memory of...

Former Education Librarian Sandrea DeMinco

Sandrea DeMinco, far right

The Library announces with sadness the passing of former Education Librarian Sandrea DeMinco on April 12, 2019 in Westerville, Ohio after a long illness. She was 69.

Sandrea joined Lehman College in 1990 as Assistant Professor, and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2001. She distinguished herself by running the College’s active Education Library, noted for its special support of School of Education students. Sandrea also developed positive collaborative relationships with Education faculty, resulting in joint publications and conference presentations. She was instrumental in developing the College’s aesthetic education program with Lincoln Center Institute.

During 2006-2007, Sandrea DeMinco served as Acting Chief Librarian. After her retirement in 2010, she was named Associate Professor Emeritus.

Professor DeMinco earned a BA in Education from SUNY Oneonta, MA in Psychology from Hunter College, and MLS from C.W. Post College. Sandrea was admired for her warmth and kindness, as well as caring attitude towards Lehman students. In her free time, she pursued creative writing.

Kenneth Schlesinger

Susan Voge, a Personal Tribute

Susan Voge was my dear friend and devoted colleague. We worked together as librarians at different posts for nearly thirty years.

I met Susan in 1981 when we both worked for Equitable Life Assurance Society. She was Chief Medical Librarian, while I was Technical Services Librarian. Susan had already worked there for several years before I joined the staff. I found her to be pleasant, gracious, and friendly. Although our jobs were different, Susan and I worked well as a team. She was quite different from many corporate colleagues who were more interested in making money or climbing the career ladder. Susan’s ambition was to apply her knowledge and skills in an academic library to help students and faculty.

After I joined Lehman College, I sought possibilities for Susan to join us. When the Education Librarian suddenly left, I urged Susan to apply. Fortunately, she was offered what became a tenure-track position. Throughout her many years of service, Susan was dedicated, committed, and responsible. Her MBA background and experience in health sciences offered invaluable support to both students and faculty. In conjunction with a Nursing faculty member, Susan co-authored a book on nursing measurement. The book was successfully published and she was awarded tenure. While Susan’s workload was demanding, she seldom complained. She taught many advanced Business classes, helped students with assignments, and assisted faculty conducting research projects. She was well-known and respected on campus.

After we both retired, Susan frequently visited me at my retirement community. Sitting under trees and surrounded by blooming flowers, we reminisced about our past achievements and frustrations at work. We also talked about our future. Susan was happy with her husband, David, and her adopted twin granddaughters. She looked forward to a long and peaceful life in her little house by the Hudson River. Last year in May, we met together with Andrea Rockower from Performing Arts and had a joyous reunion lunch. Susan promised to invite us to her house in spring of this year. I never thought that our happy 2018 luncheon would be the last time I would see her.

I am deeply saddened by Susan’s untimely passing, but our shared memories will always remain with me. She will forever be a dear and devoted friend in my life.

Kachuen Gee, Head of Technical Services [retired]
Faculty Professional Activities

**Madeline Cohen** presented a lightning talk at the LACUNY Scholarly Communications Roundtable workshop, “Scholarly Communication at CUNY: Keeping Up and Looking Ahead,” in April.

**John DeLooper** co-presented with Devlyn Courtier, Hudson County Community College (HCCC), Lotta Sanchez (HCCC), and Mei Xie (HCCC), “ILS Migrations” at Computers in Libraries, Arlington, VA, in March.


Presented with Michelle Ehrenpreis, Stephen Francoeur (Baruch), Linda Miles (Hostos), and Jennifer Poggiali, “Auto-Embedding Customized Library Research Guides into Blackboard,” CUNY IT Conference, John Jay College, in November 2018.

Presented “Introduction to Open Data Tools and Sources,” Leonard Lief Library, in March.

**Michelle Ehrenpreis** presented with John DeLooper, Stephen Francoeur (Baruch), Linda Miles (Hostos), and Jennifer Poggiali, “Auto-Embedding Customized Library Research Guides into Blackboard,” CUNY IT Conference, John Jay College, in November 2018.


**Robert Farrell** published the poem, “Good Morning,” in *Broad Street* in March.

Conducted an invited workshop on “Listening as it Relates to Library Work,” at Yeshiva University in January.

**Joan Jocson-Singh** was elected Vice President and Chair, Association of College and Research Libraries (New York Chapter) in January.


**Stacy Katz** published “Opening the Conversation: Getting Started.” *Journal of New Librarianship, 4*(1), in March.


Provided introduction and welcome at Bronx OER Celebration (Hostos), in March.

Presented with Shawna M. Brandle, “But How Do Students Feel About It?: Results of the CUNY ZTC Survey,” CUNY & SUNY OER Showcase, (Baruch), in March.

Presented with Derek Stadler and Sarah Ward on Panel on Work/Life Balance for PSC-CUNY’s Annual Junior Faculty Development Day in April.

Presented with Jennifer Van Allen, “Designing Renewable Course Assignments,” at Northeast Regional OER Summit in May.

Presented with Linda Miles, Elvis Bakaitis, Cailean Cooney, Madeline Ford, and Leslie Ward, “Get on Your Feet and Up to Speed: Ways to Start-up or Scale-up an OER Initiative,” at Northeast Regional OER Summit in May.

Presented with Shawna M. Brandle, “But How Do Students Feel About It?: Results of the CUNY ZTC Survey,” CUNY CUE Conference, in May.
Faculty Professional Activities (cont.)

Moderated panel on New York Botanical Garden and Lehman College Collaboration for Library Innovation event in April.

Selected as Scholar for Institute for Research Design in Librarianship, Loyola University, Los Angeles, in June.


Published with Wesley Pitts, “Using ePortfolio Social Pedagogy in Science Teacher Education to Engage the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,” *International Journal of ePortfolio* in May 9(1).


Invited to present Celebrating Maxine Greene Collection Exhibit at “Look Again: The Art of Multiple Perspectives,” at Imagination, Inquiry, & Innovation Institute, Manhattan College, in March.

Martha Lerski co-presented with Alexander Nunez Torres, Economics and Business, “OER Case Studies for the Bronx,” Bronx OER Celebration (Hostos), in March.

Presented “Preserving Cultural Heritage in the Time of Climate Change: Barbuda as Case Study,” Lightning Talks Challenge for Master’s Students, CUNY Graduate Center, in April.

Completed MA in Liberal Studies, CUNY Graduate Center, in May.

Janet Butler Munch introduced the film screening, *Decade of Fire: The Bronx is Burning*, Lehman College Social Justice Speaker Series, in March.

Moderated discussion of Colin Broderick’s *The Writing Irish of New York*, CUNY Institute for Irish-American Studies, CUNY Graduate Center, in May.

Presented with Emita Hill on *Bronx Faces & Voices* at the Boogie Down Bronx Book Discussion group at New York Public Library’s Bronx Library Center, in May.


Kenneth Schlesinger was promoted to Associate Dean.
Head of Reference Madeline Cohen has announced her retirement from the Leonard Lief Library effective the end of Spring 2019 after nearly ten years of service. Hired as Substitute Education Librarian in 2010, she was appointed to the permanent position in Fall 2011. However, given Susan Voge’s retirement as Head of Reference, I resolved to transfer Madeline to this position, a better match for her skills and experience.

When I worked at Time Inc. during the 1990s, I was aware of Madeline Cohen’s reputation as one of the best news librarians in the City when she headed Newsweek’s Library. When that library closed, Lehman responded favorably to her application. Having just earned a Master’s degree in History at Hunter, Madeline expressed interest in becoming an academic librarian. I was confident she could meet this challenge.

Not surprisingly – but characteristically – Madeline embraced her new responsibilities, immersing herself in the library literature and academic library culture. One of her strengths of having been a corporate librarian is the necessity of remaining receptive to emerging technologies. Professor Cohen is consistently forward-thinking in discharge of her unit, incorporating both Roving Reference and Virtual Reference to enhance existing services.

She also distinguished herself as a scholar. Becoming interested in Open Access issues, she charged into this new discipline, proposing that our Library adopt its own Open Access policy. She emerged as one of CUNY Libraries’ leaders and advocates, which transformed into work on Lehman’s Institutional Repository and Open Educational Resources. In many respects, she became the Library’s go-to person on these issues. Appropriately, in 2018 Ms. Cohen was awarded tenure and promotion to Associate Professor based on her primary function and compelling scholarly record.

Adhering to this Library’s great traditions, Madeline is primarily motivated by service to students. Having never taught before, she discovered her joy in instruction, and partnered with a library cohort to introduce flipped classroom techniques to enhance student learning and achievement. A seasoned professional – one of the best librarians I’ve worked with over my entire career – her guidance and wise counsel was actively sought by junior colleagues. Taking time to mentor library school interns, one of her sources of pride is their appointment to permanent positions at John Jay and New York University’s libraries.

Admittedly, at times I may have taken Madeline Cohen for granted because she always responded effectively to all the projects I threw her way. I remain in awe of her time management skills. Clearly, here is someone on top of her game, creatively engaged in all aspects of our worthy profession. While we of course will miss her, Madeline has expressed interest in continuing as an Adjunct in the Library. She also welcomes retirement as an opportunity to travel more and work on special projects.

Kenneth Schlesinger

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**Biblio-Tech**

**Editors:** Martha Lerski
Robin Wright

**Production Design:** Evelyn Santiago

**Webmaster:** John DeLooper

**Chief Librarian:** Kenneth Schlesinger

Thanks to Pedro Laureano, Student Disability Services Specialist for accessibility guidance

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Bronx, New York 10468-1589

For previous issues, see: [http://www.lehman.edu/library/about.php](http://www.lehman.edu/library/about.php)

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**Extended Hours**
Monday - Thursday
Study Hall
9:00am - 9:00am
Study Hall
9:00am - 9:00am
Study Hall
9:00am - 12:00am
Study Hall
8:00am - 9:00am

**Study Hall**
9:00am - 9:00am
9:00am - 9:00am
9:00am - 12:00am
8:00pm - 9:00am

**May 8 - 15**
9:00am - 11:00pm
11:00pm - 9:00am
9:00am - 9:00pm
11:00am - 9:00pm
9:00pm - 11:00am
11:00am - 8:00pm
8:00pm - 9:00am

**Final Exams**
Monday - Thursday
Study Hall
9:00am - 12:00am
12:00am - 9:00am
9:00am - 12:00am
11:00am - 12:00am
12:00am - 11:00am
11:00am - 12:00am

**May 16 - 22**
9:00am - 12:00am
12:00am - 9:00am
9:00am - 12:00am
11:00am - 12:00am
12:00am - 11:00am
11:00am - 12:00am

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**Hours**
Monday - Friday
9:00am - 4:45pm

**May 23 - 31**
Saturday May 25
Closed
Sunday May 26
Closed

**Summer Hours**
June 1 - 24
9:00am - 8:45pm

**June 25 - August 15**
Monday - Thursday
9:00am - 8:45pm

**Friday**
July 5 (Friday)
9:00am - 8:45pm

**August 16 - 26**
Monday - Friday
9:00am - 4:45pm

**CLOSED**
Memorial Day
May 27 (Monday)

**Weekends**
June 1 - September 1

**Friday**
June 28 - August 9

**Independence Day**
July 4 (Thursday)

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Library hours are subject to change. Call 718-960-7766 for current schedule.