

---

# Friends of the Smith College Libraries

April 1, 2025



Dean of Libraries Susan Fliss. Photo by Samm Smith

Dear Friends,

I'm writing to share news of a transition in library leadership at the college. Dean of Libraries Susan Fliss is retiring this week after eight and a half years of service. Susan has led the Libraries during a time of great change; and she recently sat down with Library Communications Manager Samm Smith to reflect on the challenges and opportunities she has experienced. You may [read the article here](#).

Staff from across campus gathered in Neilson on March 14 to express gratitude for her service to the college, and to wish her well. The Friends announced a special contribution in honor of her tenure leading the Libraries. Inspired by Susan's leadership in shepherding new services and other initiatives that the new Neilson made possible, the Friends directed a gift to the Dean of Libraries Innovation Fund. *"I'm just so appreciative of this gift,"* she said afterwards. *"It made me happy that there will be funds there for the next Dean of Libraries to use to help foster innovation."*



A national search is underway, and finalist candidates are being interviewed. During this time of transition, Director of Learning Research and Technology Jean Ferguson (pictured above with Susan) has been named interim Acting Dean of Libraries.

---

## **Neilson Library Celebrates its 4th Birthday!**

Last Friday, library staff and students celebrated with cake and ice cream in honor of the library's 4th birthday - see photos below. On March 29, 2021, new Neilson Library opened its doors to the campus community for the first time. It was a limited opening since it happened during the pandemic, and many students, staff, and faculty were working from home. This year's graduates - the Class of 2025 - are the first class to have known new Neilson throughout their time at Smith.





Above: library student assistants pose with Josten's Access Services Coordinator, Janet Spongberg.

Photo by Mary Irwin

---

## Spring Event



[Register here](#) to attend the on-campus screening of the documentary, [Banned Together: The Fight against Censorship](#) on **Thursday, April 17, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in Weinstein Auditorium.**

This film (1h30) traces the experiences of three high school students who get drawn into a debate about book banning at their school libraries. A conversation will follow with the director Kate Way and free speech activist Julia Garnett '28, moderated by Naila Moreira, English Department lecturer and co-director of the Journalism Concentration.

This event is co-sponsored by the Friends of the Smith College Libraries and Smith's Human Rights Initiative, with support from Smith Film & Media Studies, Government Department, Jandon Center, the Journalism Concentration, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality, and the Wurtele Center for Leadership.

---

Signs of spring are appearing around the campus, and as we move into April, students are preparing for one of the busiest months of the year. We look forward to sharing more library news with you in a couple of weeks. Thank you for being a Friend!

Best wishes,

Ann Alpers '84  
Chair, Executive Committee  
Friends of the Smith College Libraries

---

[ONLINE GIVING FORM](#)

[FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARIES](#)

[OCULUS SOCIETY](#)

---

 [FSCL Logo](#)



*Copyright © 2026, All rights reserved.*

**Our mailing address is:**

Friends of the Smith College Libraries  
Alumnae Gymnasium, 83 Green Street, Northampton, MA 01063

You are receiving this email because of your support of the Smith College Libraries.

*To unsubscribe from all emails or to update your preferences, visit the link below.*

[update subscription preferences](#)

