
Friends of the Smith College Libraries

November 2025 News



Neilson Library Glows in the Late Afternoon. Photo by Samm Smith.

Dear Friends,

In this season of gratitude, we want to express our sincere appreciation for the support you provide to the Smith College Libraries. Every year, funding from the Friends helps strengthen library collections, bring visiting scholars to campus to explore our unique resources, and support students as they extend their time in the libraries at the close of the semester. Read on to learn about the ways your contributions are making a difference this semester!

Brandy King '01, Chair
Friends of the Smith College Libraries Executive Committee

Upcoming Event - Josten Live at Five

On Friday, December 5 at 5:00 p.m., Josten Library will host a performance by Smith student pianists enrolled in MUS 901: *Chamber Music*, and coached by Jiayan Sun and Yang Liu. They will celebrate the holiday season with piano four-hands classics and works off the beaten path. Music will include Grieg's Peer Gynt Suite arranged by the composer, and more. All welcome!

A Message from Dean Nancy S. Kirkpatrick



In this [short video](#), new Dean of Libraries Nancy S. Kirkpatrick talks about her path to Smith and what inspires her about this community.

150th Anniversary

Hundreds of alums, parents, and families showed up to celebrate the college's 150th anniversary on November 1, and enjoy a day of connection, remembrance, and fun activities. There were architectural tours of Neilson with Shepley Bulfinch principal architect David Whitehill, and a pop-up exhibit in Special Collections about the founding of the college and the remarkable women whose names now adorn Granville, Haynes, King, Lee, and Rothman Houses. Members of the Friends Executive Committee were on hand to share information about the Friends and the library resources that are available to all alums.



Clockwise from top left: members of the Class of 2013 visit Neilson, Friends welcome table, alums view Special Collections exhibits, Friends Carrie Baldwin SoRelle'09, Brandy King '01 and Emily Egan '04 enjoy catching up. Photos by Jessica Scranton and Mary Irwin.

Library Staff: the Secret Sauce

When asked about library assets recently, Head of Teaching, Learning, and Research Michelle Gibeault responded with, “Smith’s number one library asset is its staff!” This “human capital” comprises talented and specialized staff who work alongside faculty in the classroom, meet one on one with students, host technology and data workshops, and provide guidance at all levels in the production of scholarship. “I am constantly impressed by their knowledge, their motivation, and the joy that they invest in their work,” said Gibeault.



Visual Arts Librarian discusses the new Zine Collection in Hillyer Art Library with students and staff. Photo by Samm Smith.

Uptick in Teaching & Collaboration

First Year Experience & Humanities Librarian Xochitl Queroz has met with a record number of first year seminars this semester through a close collaboration with Psychology professor M.J. Wraga, who oversees the seminars. Science Librarian Elise Gowen has also experienced an increase in requests from STEM faculty to provide instruction in their classes. Data and Social Sciences Librarian Sarah Hunter, who is new to Smith this year, has been providing data literacy workshops this fall, and will inaugurate a Data Literacy Fellowship program for faculty next semester. **Altogether, research librarians scheduled a record 74 class sessions this semester!**

Privacy Matters

The Libraries held a series of three campus events this fall dedicated to privacy and what individuals can do to preserve it in a time of increasing digital surveillance. The events

included "Why Privacy Still Matters," an overview of the shifting history of privacy in the US. This was followed by "Privacy in an Age of Surveillance," featuring a panel of faculty members, Carrie Baker (Study of Women and Gender), Nathan DuFord (Government), and Erin Pineda (Government), who spoke about the history of government and corporate surveillance, especially against marginalized groups. The final event was an interactive workshop on ways that Smith community members could start protecting their own digital privacy through new tools and tips. The events were organized by Elise Gowen, Xochitl Quiroz, and Scholarly Communications Librarian Jessica Ryan.

Cookies and Cram



(Left to right) Madelyn Malgieri '27, Candace Russell '26, Alesandra Powell '26, Dezerai Mendoza '28, Maya Joncas '26, Margaret Kirkpatrick '26. Photo by Esther Roth-Katz.

Neilson's Learning Commons is a student-centered space where students receive personalized support for their learning. This is provided by library and academic support staff and peer mentors. Library Research Mentors can help other students locate a book or peer-reviewed articles, format their citations, and more, while peer tutors provide students with assistance at any stage of the writing process. On November 18, Library Research Mentors and Peer Writing Tutors joined forces for the second Campus Cram session of the semester. **Armed with trays of cookies, they fielded research and writing questions from over 300 students.**

Student Research Mentor Candace Russell '26 shared this reflection about her role, *"I consistently learn something new about different disciplines during consultations, and I complete that exchange of knowledge by widening the students' worldview in return; I promote awareness of the skills that equip them to use the library in a way suited to their*

academic and social needs.”



Students meet one-on-one with Library Research Mentors and peer tutors in the Learning Commons.

Special Collections News

Special Collections staff welcomed 43 courses with a total of 62 individual class visits to their third floor seminar rooms this semester. Some courses came for a one-time visit while others visited multiple times, such as Michael Thurston's "America in 1925" and Kelly Anderson's "Rebellious Women".



Sophia Smith Collection Archivist Mariana Brandman teaches with primary source archival materials.

Notable Acquisitions

The Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History has acquired the records of [Breast Cancer Action](#), a grassroots organization that promoted education and activism around breast cancer. The organization was founded in San Francisco in 1991 to advocate for systemic interventions that address the root causes of the disease and produce broad public health benefits.



Sample page from *Bible: Gospels in Arabic and Latin*, published in 1591.

The Mortimer Rare Book Collection has acquired a first edition copy of *Bible: Gospels in Arabic and Latin*, published by the Medici Oriental Press in Rome in 1591. Curator of Rare Books Erin McGuirl said she considered it “a fitting addition to our very strong collection documenting the history of the book because it represents the first ‘satisfactory’ Arabic type, designed by Robert Granjon. It is also the first book published by the Medici Oriental Press.” Fans of Ruth Mortimer will be pleased to know that she described this work in great detail in her famed catalog of the Harvard Graphic Arts Collection of 16th Century Italian Books.

Read this [profile of Erin McGuirl](#) discussing the joy of teaching with rare books and connecting across generations and formats.

Visitors Welcomed

Earlier this month, the college hosted the 2025 international conference of the Society for Interdisciplinary French Seventeenth-Century Studies. Special Collections welcomed visiting faculty and scholars to view a pop-up exhibit of 17th century rare books from the Mortimer

Rare Book Collection, prepared by Erin McGuirl.



Scholars attending the international conference of the Society for Interdisciplinary French Seventeenth-Century Studies pore over rare 17th century books from the Martimer Rare Book Collection. Photos by Samm Smith.

Steinem Materials Digitized

The photographs, speeches, and analog audiovisual materials contained in [the Gloria Steinem papers](#) have now been digitized, and will soon be available on the [digital access site Compass](#). This represents an increase of 13 terabytes of digital content available to a global audience.

Staff from the Ms. Foundation for Women visited Special Collections last week as part of a staff retreat to connect with the organization's history through their archives and to draw inspiration for future work.

Fellowship Applications

[Special Collections research fellowships](#) are now open for the 2026-2027 cycle, including two fellowships funded by the Friends of the Libraries. A new addition is the Robert and Judith Raymo Chaucer Fellowship, which provides short term travel support to consult the books and related materials in the [Robert and Judith Raymo Chaucer Collection](#).

New Journals Available to Alums Online

We are pleased to announce the addition of five new journals to the online library resources that we make available to all Smith alums. These are hosted by [The Company of Biologists](#) and include: *Development*, *Journal of Cell Science*, *Journal of Experimental Biology*, *Disease Models & Mechanisms*, and *Biology Open*. To access these, [login to the Smith College Alum Network](#) and click on "Library Benefits" from the list of options.

Featured in ScholarWorks

Jessica Ryan's November selection from recent additions to Smith ScholarWorks is "[Building a New World in the Shell of the Old: Co-Designing Post-Capitalist Visions](#)," by Alix Gerber, Assistant Director of the Design Thinking Initiative. Smith ScholarWorks is Smith's institutional repository of digital scholarship and research materials created and curated by

Smith faculty, students, and staff.

End of Year Gifts

Many of you make annual gifts at this time of year, and the Libraries are grateful for your generosity. If you wish to renew your support, please follow [this link to our online giving form](#). You may also send a check to: Smith College Gift Accounting, 33 Elm Street, Northampton MA 01063, adding the fund name on the check memo line.

Note: if you use the online giving form on the main Smith website, and would like to direct your donation to the Friends, Special Collections or another library fund, be sure to enter the fund name in the "designation" box on the donation form.

As 2025 will soon come to a close, we wish you a pleasant season of celebration, and look forward to connecting again in the new year!

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

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