



NEWSLETTER

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Department of Information & Library Science



Editor & Designer:
Dr. Saira Soroya

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Message from the Chair



Over the past year, our department has remained steadfast in its mission to prepare information professionals to lead in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. From scholarly publications and conference presentations to professional advancements and new community partnerships, the achievements of our students, faculty, and alumni have been truly inspiring. These accomplishments reflect not only individual dedication but also the collaborative spirit that defines our department.

Dear Students, Faculty, Alumni, and Friends!

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the second edition of the Annual Newsletter for the Department of Information and Library Science at Southern Connecticut State University.

Building on the success of our inaugural issue, this edition highlights another year of remarkable growth, innovation, and meaningful engagement within our academic community.

As the fields of library and information science continue to evolve, we are committed to ensuring that our curriculum, research, and outreach remain relevant, impactful, and responsive to societal needs. Our recent initiatives in digital accessibility, data literacy, and emerging technologies such as AI exemplify how we are proactively adapting to meet the challenges of the future.

Message from the Chair. ...

This year also brings significant transitions within our department. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations and deep appreciation to *Professor Cindy Schofield* and Department Secretary *Kathryn Opalenik* on their upcoming retirements at the end of the Spring 2026 semester. Their contributions to the department have been immeasurable, and they will be greatly missed.

At the same time, we are excited to continue growing our team. Please join me in welcoming our new full-time faculty member, *Dr. Kathleen Kasten-Mutkus*, who brings valuable expertise in Archival Studies. Additionally, a search for a new department secretary is currently underway to ensure the continued strength and support of our programs.

This newsletter serves as both a record of our progress and a celebration of our community.

I hope you find these updates informative and inspiring. We are profoundly grateful for the continued support of our students, alumni, colleagues, and partners—your contributions make our work possible.

Thank you for being part of our journey.

Warm Regards,

Hak Joon Kim, Ph.D.

Chair and Professor

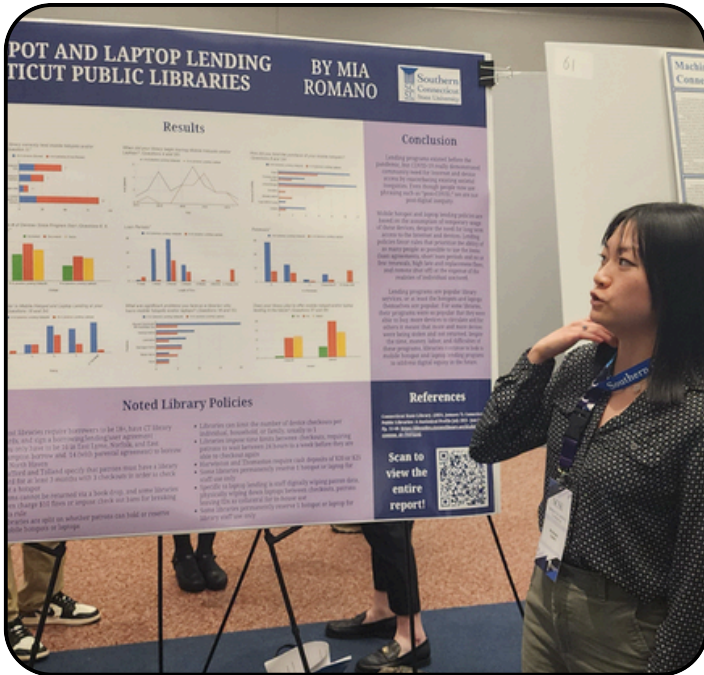
Students' Conference Presentations



Our students, in collaboration with Dr. Saira Soroya, actively contributed to several prestigious conferences in 2025, showcasing a wide range of research in emerging areas of librarianship and information science.

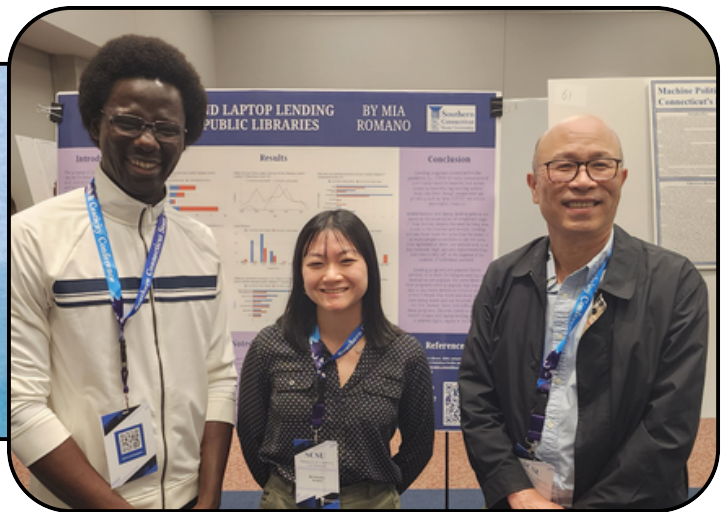
- **Zack Mans** and Dr. Soroya presented a poster titled “The Viability of AI Integration in Librarianship” at ASIS&T 2025, examining the potential and implications of integrating AI into library practice. Expanding on this work, they also delivered a paper presentation, “The Viability of AI Supplementation in Librarianship: Exploring the Impacts on Professional Practice and User Services,” at the Connecticut Library Association (CLA) Annual Conference 2025.
- **Kelly King**, in collaboration with Dr. Soroya, presented “Employee Insights for the Future of DEI” at the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), New England Chapter, highlighting staff perspectives on diversity, equity, and inclusion in academic libraries. They also presented “Exploring the Relationship Between Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Efforts and Academic Library Staff Experiences” at the Graduate Student Research & Creativity Conference at Southern Connecticut State University.

Students' Conference Presentations. ...



Mia Romano and Dr. Soroya contributed a poster presentation titled “Mobile Hotspot and Laptop Lending in Connecticut Public Libraries” at the Graduate Student Research & Creativity Conference (2025) at the Southern Connecticut State University, focusing on access, digital equity, and the role of public libraries in bridging the digital divide.

These presentations reflect the department’s strong commitment to student research, mentorship, and engagement with timely issues such as AI, DEI, and equitable access to information.



Students' Research Publications



- Liu, Y. Q., **Buedinger, A.**, & Murtha, H. R. (2025). Inclusive Access: Evaluating Public Library Resources for Visually and Hearing Impaired Communities. *Public Library Quarterly*, 1-19.

Buedinger, A., SCSU MLIS graduate. The publication was advanced from her Summer 2023 ILS 660 Special Project course project, "Services Available to Individuals with Visual Impairments and Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Public Libraries",

- **Torres, N.**, & Liu, Y. Q. (2025). Digitization Practices in US Urban Libraries: Tools, Technologies, and Metadata Standards. *Public Library Quarterly*, 1-19.

Torres, N., SCSU MLIS graduate. The publication was advanced from her Spring 2024 ILS 655 Digital Librarianship course project, "The best practice, tools and standards used in library digitization: A review of case studies and best practices".

Students' Research Publications



- **Anderson, J. K., & Liu, Y. Q. (2025).** Adopting Critical Cataloging Practices Post Diversity Audit: Connecting the Community to Your Collection. *Library Resources & Technical Services*, 69(3).

Anderson, J. K., SCSU MLIS graduate. The publication was advanced from her Spring 2024 ILS 699 Thesis course project, “Adopting Critical Cataloging Practices Post-Diversity Audit: It's Your Community's Connection to Your Collection.”

Our Students
Our Pride

Graduation Celebrations



Award Recipients



Two students, *Ana Felipe* and *Zachary Michael Mans*, were selected as recipients of the Outstanding *MLIS Student Award for 2025* in recognition of their exceptional academic achievement and contributions to the program.

Scholarship Recipients



1 Arlene B. Buley Endowed Scholarship

- Nadya McCauley
- Michelle Lopez

2 Carol A. Stone Scholarship Fund

- Kaleb L. Cahoon
- Zachary P. Bienvenu

3 Charlene H. Riccardi

- Milton E. Ward

4 Elma Jean and John Wiack Jr. Endowed Scholarship Fund

- Flor De Maria Garrido

5 Eula Davies Scholarship Fund

- Clare Gilliat

6 Lois Elizabeth Johnson Endowed Scholarship Fund

- Flor De Maria Garrido

7 Sage Family Trust Library Science Scholarship Fund

- Brianna N. Dainiak
- Steven L. Greenstein

8 The Jung Family Fund

- Luke M. D'Ancicco

Faculty Publications



We are pleased to announce the book publication titled “Advancing Library Services for Mobile Users” by Professor LiU published by IGI Global in 2026.

This new work highlights innovative approaches to enhancing library services for mobile users and reflects Professor Liu’s continued contributions to research and practice in library and information science.



Free Preview

Faculty Publications. ...

Journal Articles (Peer Reviewed)

- Brown, M. E., & **Kim, H. J.** (2025). A Study of the Coverage of Open Educational Resources (OER) through Websites of Colleges and Universities in Connecticut. *Practical Academic Librarianship: The International Journal of the SLA Academic Division*, 15(2): 75-92.
<https://pal-ojs-tamu.tdl.org/pal/article/view/7195>
- **Liu, Y. Q.**, Buedinger, A., & Murtha, H. R. (2025). Inclusive Access: Evaluating Public Library Resources for Visually and Hearing Impaired Communities. *Public Library Quarterly*, 1-19.
- Torres, N., & **Liu, Y. Q.** (2025). Digitization Practices in US Urban Libraries: Tools, Technologies, and Metadata Standards. *Public Library Quarterly*, 1-19.
- *Anderson, J. K., & Liu, Y. Q. (2025). Adopting Critical Cataloging Practices Post Diversity Audit: Connecting the Community to Your Collection. Library Resources & Technical Services, 69(3).*
- *Liang, X., Liu, Y. Q., Chen, L., & Li, Y. (2025). Assessment of Think Tank Service Awareness in China's Top Academic Libraries. Journal of Public Administration, 7(1).*
<https://sryahwapublications.com/article/download/2642-8318.0701004>

Faculty Publications. ...

Journal Articles. ...

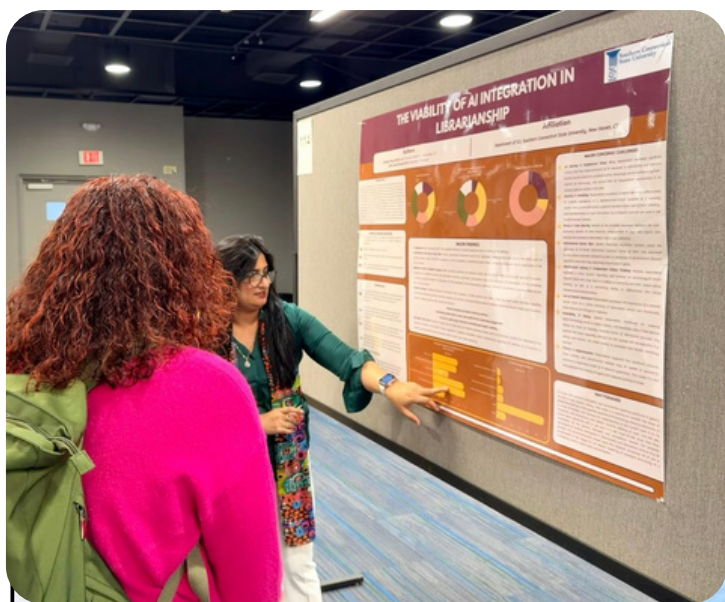
- Muhammad Zahid Raza, Muhammad Rafiq, **Soroya, S. H.** (2025). Perceived awareness, benefits, and strategies of Pakistani editors regarding open-access journal publishing. *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication*, <https://doi.org/10.1108/GKMC-09-2024-0591>
- Raza, M. Z., Rafiq, M., & **Soroya, S. H.** (2025). Perceptions of the Pakistani editors for open access journal publishing: a developing country's perspective. *Information Development*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/02666669251325514>
- **Salubi, O.** (2025). Artificial Intelligence, Misinformation, and Libraries: A New Frontier for Information Professionals. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 62(1), 572-581
- **Salubi, O.** (2025). Data-driven decolonization: Integrating social justice principles in LIS for knowledge production and processing in Africa. In A. Mfengu & R. Raju (Eds.), *Advancing social justice through curriculum realignment: Centering scholarly communication in LIS curricula* (pp. 243-261). UCT Libraries Press.

Faculty Presentations

Dr. Oghenere (Gabriel) Salubi presented a paper titled “Artificial Intelligence, Misinformation, and Libraries: A New Frontier for Information Professionals” at the ASIS&T 2025 conference.

The presentation explored the growing challenges posed by AI-generated misinformation and examined the evolving role of libraries and information professionals

in addressing issues of credibility, information literacy, and ethical use of emerging technologies.



Dr. Saira Soroya and Dr. Hak Joon Kim presented a poster titled “Balancing Equity and Access: Acquisition Librarians' Views on Social Justice in Collection Development” at the ASIS&T 2025 conference. The poster highlighted perspectives of acquisition librarians on integrating social justice principles into collection development, emphasizing equitable access,

inclusive representation, and the challenges of balancing institutional priorities with community needs.

Faculty Presentations. ...

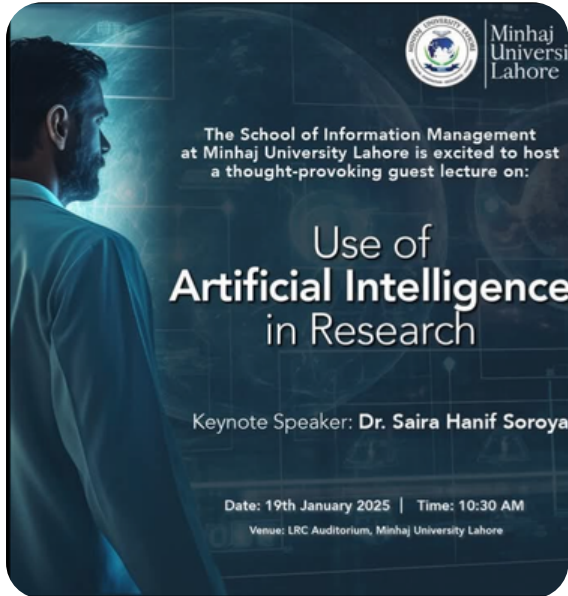
Dr. Saira Soroya served as an invited speaker at Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan, on July 3, 2025, where she delivered a talk titled “Strategic Career Development through International Fellowships and Scholarships.”



A promotional poster for a workshop. At the top left are the logos of the School of Communication Studies and the University of the Punjab, Lahore. The text reads: "SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB, LAHORE." Below this is the title: "HOW TO DEVELOP OUR OWN FUNCTIONAL CHAT BOTS FOR ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES". To the right, it says "13 JAN MONDAY 12 - 30 PM". The word "Workshop" is written in a large, blue, cursive font. The central image shows a group of people in a seminar setting. At the bottom left is a circular portrait of Dr. Saira Hanif Soroya. Below the portrait, her name and title are listed: "DR. SAIRA HANIF SOROYA ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR INFORMATION & LIBRARY SCIENCE DEPARTMENT, SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY, NEW HAVEN, CT, USA". At the bottom, there is a phone number "+92-300-4196266" and the location "EDWARD SAID BOARD ROOM".

Dr. Saira Soroya delivered a talk at a seminar titled “How to Develop Our Own Functional Bots for Academic Activities” on January 13, 2025, at the University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

Faculty Presentations. ...



Dr. Saira Soroya delivered a keynote address titled “AI & Libraries: Pakistan’s Untold Opportunity” at the PLC 6th National Convention on AI in Libraries, held at Allama Iqbal Open University on April 19, 2025.

In addition, she was invited to speak on “Use of AI in Research” at Minhaj University Lahore on January 19, 2025, where she shared insights on the evolving role of artificial intelligence in research practices.

Graduate Research Assistance Award



Dr. Saira Soroya received the 2025 Graduate Research Assistance Program Award by the SCSU Research and Scholarship Advisory Committee (RSAC), under the Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Research Grants

PI: Dr. Yan Quan Liu

“A Gestural Pathway Platform For K-12 Students to Support Next Generation Science Standards”

Funded by the Center for CSU/AAUP 2025-2026 (\$10,000)

Co-PI: Dr. Saira Soroya

“Understanding AI in Connecticut Schools ”

Funded by the Connecticut StateDepartment of Education 2024-2025 (\$125,000)

Co-PI: Dr. Saira Soroya

“Evaluation of AI Pilot Project in Connecticut Schools”

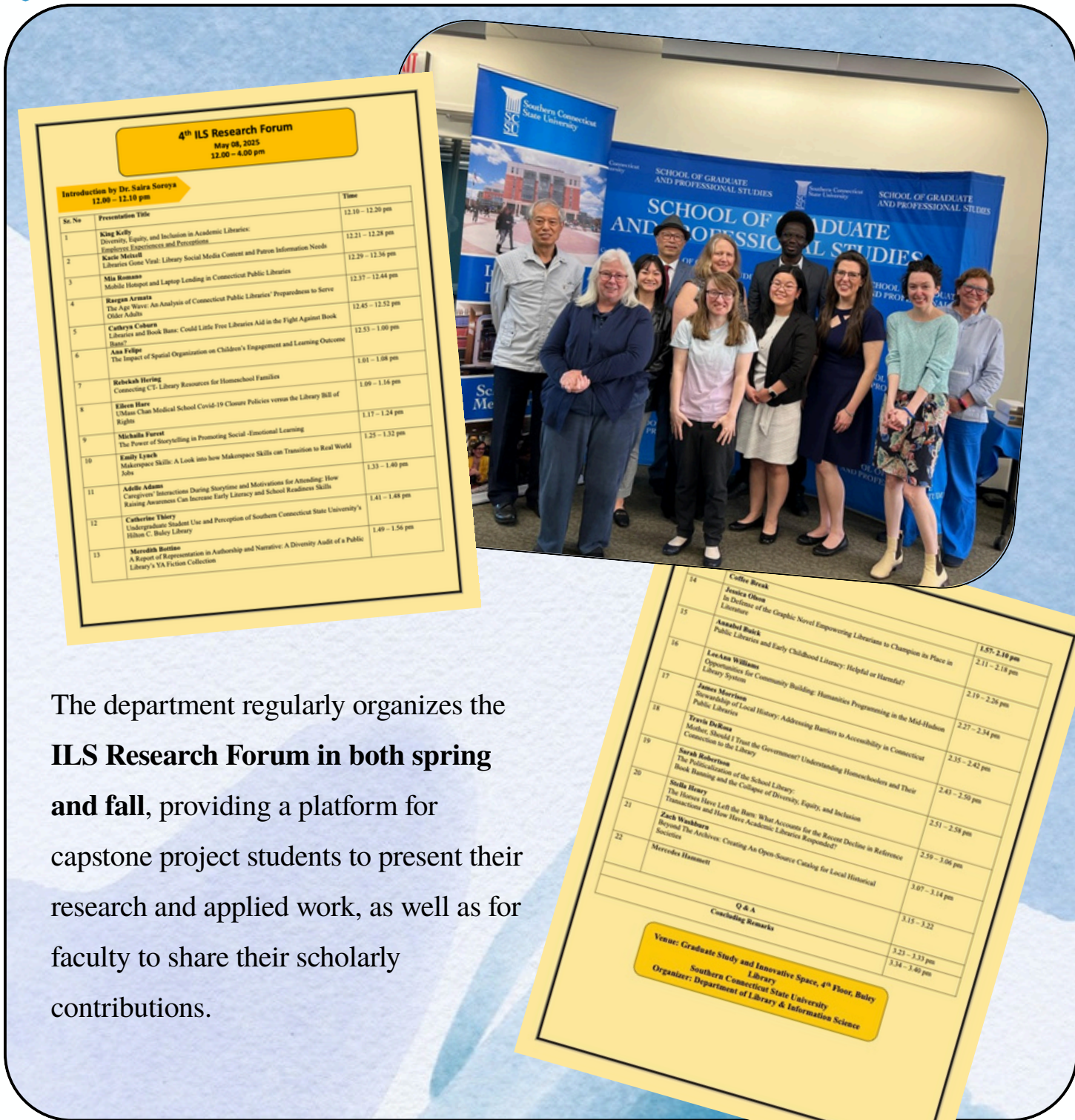
Funded by the Connecticut StateDepartment of Education 2025-2026 (\$40,000)

PI: Dr. Saira Soroya

"Graduate Research Assistance Program: Award for Spring 2025"

Funded by Research and Scholarship Advisory Committee, SCSU, year 2025 (\$3000)

ILS Research Forum Spring 2025



The department regularly organizes the **ILS Research Forum in both spring and fall**, providing a platform for capstone project students to present their research and applied work, as well as for faculty to share their scholarly contributions.

4th ILS Research Forum
May 08, 2025
12.00 – 4.00 pm

Introduction by Dr. Saira Soroya
12.00 – 12.10 pm

Sr. No	Presentation Title	Time
1	King Kelly Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Academic Libraries: Employee Experiences and Perceptions	12.10 – 12.20 pm
2	Karlu Mitchell Librarians Gone Viral: Library Social Media Content and Patron Information Needs	12.21 – 12.28 pm
3	Mia Romano Mobile Hotspot and Laptop Lending in Connecticut Public Libraries	12.29 – 12.36 pm
4	Ravyn Armata The Age Wave: An Analysis of Connecticut Public Libraries' Preparedness to Serve Older Adults	12.37 – 12.44 pm
5	Cadryn Coburn Libraries and Book Bins: Could Little Free Libraries Aid in the Fight Against Book Bins?	12.45 – 12.52 pm
6	Alex Felipe The Impact of Spatial Organization on Children's Engagement and Learning Outcomes	12.53 – 1.00 pm
7	Rebekah Hering Connecting CT: Library Resources for Homeschool Families	1.01 – 1.16 pm
8	Eileen Hare UMass Chan Medical School Covid-19 Closure Policies versus the Library Bill of Rights	1.09 – 1.16 pm
9	Michella Forest The Power of Storytelling in Promoting Social-Emotional Learning	1.17 – 1.24 pm
10	Emily Lynch Makerspace Skills: A Look into how Makerspace Skills can Transition to Real World Jobs	1.25 – 1.32 pm
11	Adelle Adams Caregivers' Interactions During Storytime and Motivations for Attending: How Raising Awareness Can Increase Early Literacy and School Readiness Skills	1.33 – 1.40 pm
12	Catherine Thiers Undergraduate Student Use and Perception of Southern Connecticut State University's Hilton C. Buley Library	1.41 – 1.48 pm
13	Meredith Buttollo A Report of Representation in Authorship and Narrative: A Diversity Audit of a Public Library's YA Fiction Collection	1.49 – 1.56 pm

14	Coffee Break	
15	Jessica Olson In Defense of the Graphic Novel: Empowering Librarians to Champion its Place in Literature	1.57- 2.10 pm
16	Anastasi Bokik Public Libraries and Early Childhood Literacy: Helpful or Harmful?	2.11 – 2.18 pm
17	LeeAnn Williams Opportunities for Community Building: Humanities Programming in the Mid-Hudson Library System	2.19 – 2.26 pm
18	James Morrison Stewardship of Local History: Addressing Barriers to Accessibility in Connecticut Public Libraries	2.27 – 2.34 pm
19	Trevin DeVries Medias: Should I Trust the Government? Understanding Homelessness in Connecticut	2.35 – 2.42 pm
20	Sarah Robertson The Politicization of the School Library: Book Banning and the Challenge of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	2.43 – 2.50 pm
21	Stella Henry The Haves Have Left the Bins: What Accounts for the Recent Decline in Reference Transactions and How Have Academic Libraries Responded?	2.51 – 2.58 pm
22	Zach Washburn Beyond The Archives: Creating An Open-Source Catalog for Local Historical Societies	2.59 – 3.06 pm
	Mercedes Hammett	3.07 – 3.14 pm
	Q & A	3.15 – 3.22 pm
	Concluding Remarks	3.23 – 3.33 pm
		3.34 – 3.40 pm

Venue: Graduate Study and Innovative Space, 4th Floor, Buley Library
Southern Connecticut State University
Organizer: Department of Library & Information Science

ILS Research Forum Fall 2025



All ILS faculty members, librarians, research students, the Dean of the College of Education, and the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies at SCSU attended the ILS Research Forum and expressed their appreciation for the students' outstanding showcase of research work.



ALA Student Chapter Seminar

The SCSU ALA Student Chapter hosted a meeting on November 7, 2025, at Southern, featuring a guest lecture by Maria Bernhey, City Librarian and Director of the New Haven Free Public Library.



The session, titled “Public Libraries and Community Engagement,” highlighted her extensive experience in urban public librarianship, innovative programming, and community-focused initiatives. Attendees had the opportunity to gain insights into her professional journey—from serving as a children’s librarian in the Bronx to leading strategic efforts in New Haven—while engaging in meaningful discussion over light refreshments.

News from the Department



▶ **Prof. Cindy Schofield** will retire at the end of the Spring semester 2026 after nearly 50 years of dedicated service to the ILS profession. Her long-standing contributions to teaching, mentorship, and the advancement of the field have had a lasting impact on students, colleagues, and the broader professional community.

▶ The department secretary, **Kay Opalenik**, will be retiring at the end of the Spring 2026 semester. We sincerely thank her for her many years of dedicated service, professionalism, and unwavering support to the department.

▶ **Dr. Oghenere (Gabriel) Salubi** has been elected to serve as Chair-elect of the ASIS&T SIG-IEP.

▶ Connecticut Association of School Librarians (CASL) received the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) 2026 Chapter of the Year Award. Congratulations to their Executive Team and the department adjunct professor, **David Bilmes**, who serves as a CASL Board Member At Large

From the Classroom to the Stacks: The SCSU MLIS Internship Program

By Prof. Cindy Schofield (Internship Coordinator)

When the Master of Library and Information Science program at Southern Connecticut State University was being reimagined 10 years ago, a core element of the new program was a required internship.



It is widely recognized that the best preparation for a professional library career is not found in a textbook alone. It is found in the daily rhythm of a working library — in the reference interview that challenges a student to truly listen, in the cataloging project that demands precision and judgment, in the instruction session that transforms a nervous graduate student into a confident teacher.

From the Classroom to the Stacks: The SCSU MLIS Internship Program. ...

A Philosophy Rooted in Practice

Library science is, at its heart, a service profession. The knowledge and skills our students develop in the classroom — the principles of information organization, the ethics of access, the theory behind reference instruction — are only fully understood when applied in real library environments. Our internship program supplements course work with experiential learning.

When an MLIS intern steps into a host library, they bring with them a current, rigorous academic foundation. What they gain in return is something no course can fully replicate: the texture of professional practice.

They learn how institutions work, how colleagues collaborate, how competing priorities are balanced, and how the values of librarianship play out in everyday decisions.



From the Classroom to the Stacks: The SCSU MLIS Internship Program. ...

What Our Interns Do

The scope of work available to MLIS interns in academic, school, public and special library settings is remarkably broad.

Depending on the needs and strengths of the host institution, interns may find themselves engaged in original and copy cataloging, reference and research services, the development and delivery of information literacy instruction, digitization and metadata projects, collection assessment, the creation of research guides, or work in special collections and archives.



Public library interns may be building robots with teenagers or reading stories to preschoolers. Many interns take on projects that have been waiting on the back burner — discrete, meaningful initiatives that benefit the library while giving the student a genuine sense of accomplishment and ownership.

From the Classroom to the Stacks: The SCSU MLIS Internship Program. ...

This past year, SCSU interns have worked at partner institutions across Connecticut, and contributed to the mission of the institution by engaging in children's programming, creating social media campaigns, deciphering old English handwriting on historical documents to creating related metadata, developing subject specific research guides, reclassifying book collections and so much more! In each case, the intern arrived as a student and departed as a colleague.



The Mentor's Role

None of this would be possible without the commitment of the professional librarians who serve as mentors and supervisors at our host institutions. These are not simply supervisors assigning tasks — they are practitioners sharing a professional heritage. The mentorship relationship is one of the most powerful dimensions of the internship experience, and we do not take lightly the time and care our partners invest in it. For the mentors themselves, supervising an intern offers its own rewards: the opportunity to reflect on and articulate institutional knowledge, to engage with the latest ideas emerging from the field, and to invest in a profession they clearly love.

From the Classroom to the Stacks: The SCSU MLIS Internship Program. ...

A Partnership That Benefits Everyone

We are proud of the relationships the SCSU MLIS program has cultivated with libraries throughout Connecticut. Host institutions gain motivated, well-prepared contributors. Students gain experience that makes them competitive candidates for professional positions. And Connecticut's library community gains what it needs most: a sustainable pipeline of talented, locally trained professionals who are ready to serve.

If your institution is interested in hosting an MLIS intern, we would love to hear from you. The process is straightforward, the investment of time is modest, and the rewards — for your library, for your staff, and for the profession — are lasting.



*For more information about the SCSU
MLIS Internship Program, please
contact [Professor Cindy Schofield,
schofieldc2@southernct.edu*

Southern at the Regional Conferences (NELA & CLA)



ILS Faculty members from the department represented Southern's ILS program at the annual regional conferences of the New England Library Association (NELA) and the Connecticut Library Association (CLA), where they participated as vendors and engaged with the broader professional community. These events also provided valuable opportunities to reconnect with program alumni. In addition, ILS faculty members and students presented their research and professional work at the CLA conference, showcasing the department's ongoing contributions to scholarship and practice in the field.

What We Offer?

Graduate Programs (online)

- Library and Information Science (MLIS)
- School Library Media Specialist (SLMS), Graduate Certificate

Core Courses

ILS 502 (MLIS/SLMS)

Fundamentals of Library and Information Science

An overview of the history, philosophy, purpose, function and structure of library/information agencies.

ILS 505 (MLIS/SLMS)

Information Resources Organization and Management

The description and organization of information resources; metadata, bibliographic records, databases, and catalogs.

ILS 507 (MLIS/SLMS)

Information Science and Technology

Principles and applications of computers, information systems, and communication technologies in libraries and information centers.

ILS 508 (MLIS/SLMS)

User Services

Planning, programming, implementation and evaluation of library and information services for a variety of users.

ILS 509 (MLIS)

Management of Library and Information Agencies

General principles of management theory and practice applicable to various types of information agencies. Decision-making, planning and employment practices are emphasized

ILS 545 (SLMS)

Administration and Design of School Library Media Centers

Overall administration of the school library media center including policy development, budgeting, personnel, organization, facilities, technology, and instruction.

ILS 582 (MLIS/SLMS)

Library Science Internship

A professional work experience in an academic, public, or special collections library, school library media center, archives, or similar institution.

ILS 528: Public Library Services for Children

ILS 529: Public Library Services for Young Adults

ILS 544: Introduction to Research Methods in ILS

ILS 549: AI Tools in Library Services

For more information, please consult our "[Curriculum](#)."

New Offering 1.5 Credit Courses

Advisory Board Members

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Anne Langley

Vice Chair

Deborah Schander

MEMBERS

1. Alice Knapp
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3. Ellen Paul
4. Christopher Trombly
5. Hak Joon Kim
6. Carl Antonucci
7. Joseph Farara
8. Anne Langley
9. Marie Shaw
10. Barbara Rockenbach
11. Deborah Schander
12. Amy Beth
13. Maria Bernhey
14. Alessandra Casiello
15. Valerie DiLorenzo
16. Milton Ward

1. President, Ferguson Library (Stamford), aknapp@fergusonlibrary.org
2. Past President, NESLA (New England School Library Association), meminichiello@gmail.com
3. Executive Director, CLC (CT Library Consortium), epaul@ctlibrarians.org
4. Dean, College of Education, SCSU, tromblyc1@southernct.edu
5. Chair of ILS Department, SCSU, kimh1@southernct.edu
6. Director of Library Services, CCSU, antonucci@ccsu.edu
7. Executive Director, Libraries Online (LION), jfarara@lioninc.org
8. Dean, UConn Library, anne.langley@uconn.edu
9. Past Program Coordinator, Library Technology Certificate, Three Rivers Community College, marie.shaw@ctstate.edu
10. University Librarian, Yale University Library, barbara.rockenbach@yale.edu
11. State Librarian, Connecticut State Library, Deborah.Schander@ct.gov
12. Director of Library Services, SCSU, betha1@southernct.edu
13. City Librarian, New Haven Free Public Library, mbernhey@nhfpl.org
14. Executive Director, Bibliomation, acasiello@biblio.org
15. President of the Connecticut Association of School Librarians (CASL), dilorv@danbury.k12.ct.us
16. Graduate Student Representative, SCSU, wardm13@southernct.edu

Faculty Members



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