

University Libraries 2025 Impact Report



University Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

A farewell message from Dean Robert H. McDonald

Dear Friends,

As some of you may already know, I will be leaving the campus at the end of June to take on a new role at the University of Texas at Austin. My time at CU Boulder was incredibly fulfilling and I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked with each of you. My wife Courtney and I are very excited about this next chapter in our lives and the adventures it will bring, but it is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye to all of our friends, colleagues and patrons of CU Boulder. As you will see from this impact report incredible work remains to be done in support of student success.

This year, I'm proud to highlight the heart of our work: our students and their success. Throughout my time at CU Boulder, I've been continually inspired by the curiosity, creativity and determination of our students—and by the ways the University Libraries help foster those qualities every day.

Whether it's the thrill of discovery from finding a source of inspiration for a paper in our extensive collections and databases, the joy of encountering something rare and unique—like the music student who this spring physically held items from the new Glenn Miller Collection—or like our outstanding student graduate who exemplifies our mission of service to the campus community, the library plays a quiet but powerful role in their individual journeys. It has been one of the greatest privileges of my career to be part of that work.

At its core, a great library does more than support academic achievement. It meets learners where they are on their lifelong learning journey. By teaching research skills, providing open access to knowledge and protecting the right to explore ideas freely, we help prepare students not just to succeed in their classes, but to make a difference throughout their lives.

In this 2025 Impact Report, we've gathered stories and images that reflect the many ways the University Libraries are helping students thrive through our collections, services and spaces. I invite you to spend time with this collection of impact stories and see how your support has led to this success.

Your support brings our students closer to achieving their dreams and helps the University Libraries build bridges and communities that lead to academic and future achievements. Thank you for helping make this possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert H. McDonald".

Robert H. McDonald

Dean of University Libraries,
Senior Vice Provost of Online and Extended Education



Classroom in Norlin Library

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One Seed in bloom

A Libraries program sows interest in university history.

Visit campus in August and you may come across several beds of 10-foot tall red sunflowers.

These blooms are the result of the University Libraries One Seed program which connects the local community with CU Boulder's extensive archival collections and unique scientific legacy of the red sunflower by sharing the seeds with them to grow in their own gardens.

One Seed began in 2021 and since then we have distributed over 7,200 seed packets to the community including Outdoor Services in Facilities Management who planted them across campus.

"After hearing the history of these sunflowers, I was excited to be a part of creating a display on main campus," said Christian Parker, horticulture and weed management supervisor in Outdoor Services.

The red sunflower—also known as the Cockerell Sunflower—was discovered and cultivated in Boulder, Colorado by high school biology teacher Wilmatte Porter Cockerell and her husband CU Boulder professor of zoology Theodore Dru Allison Cockerell in 1910. The CU Digital Library contains many of his research notes on species, letters to colleagues, films, lantern slide images and more.

"We started One Seed as a way to share the T.D.A. Cockerell Collection, a vibrant part of our archives with unique materials that relate directly to the university's history," explained STEM Engagement Librarian Abbey Lewis who started the One Seed program.

Recently, Parker and several other employees in Outdoor Services stopped by the University Libraries to view the collection in-person—including the over 100 year old preserved red sunflower grown in the Cockerells' garden.

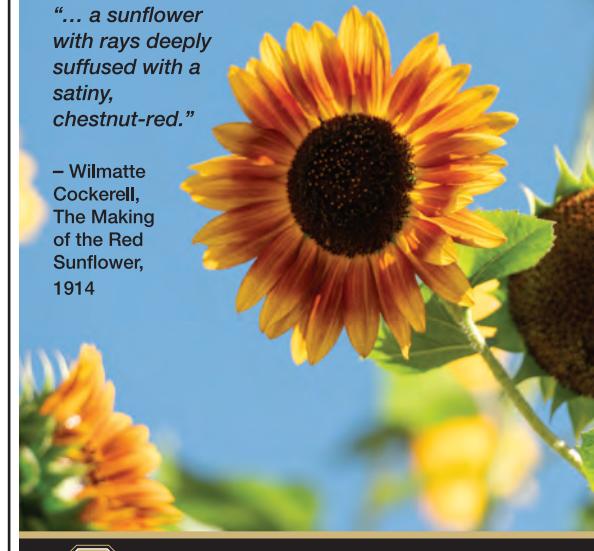
"It's been a great teaching tool and fun way to engage people with the Libraries," said Lewis. "And it's often reciprocal—we give the community a story from CU Boulder's history and in turn, they tell their own story with us sharing pictures, gardening plans and how red their flowers have gotten."

Grow Our Collections

The Cockerell Sunflower

"... a sunflower with rays deeply suffused with a satiny, chestnut-red."

— Wilmatte Cockerell,
The Making
of the Red
Sunflower,
1914



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Since One Seed began in 2021, we have distributed over 7,200 seed packets to the community. That is approximately 108,000 red sunflowers.

Advancing graduate studies with CAAAS

Through personalized research support and strategic investment, the Libraries are fueling bold, interdisciplinary work with Center for African and African American Studies (CAAAS).

Today's graduate students working in Black and African American studies are pursuing bold, interdisciplinary questions that require navigating scattered, unconventional, or under-documented sources.

Thanks to a generous grant from the EBSCO Family Foundation, the University Libraries are there to provide advanced research support and year long programming that will benefit the CAAAS Graduate Student Fellowship recipients.

This past year, a dedicated research librarian supported eight students in the CAAAS Graduate Student Fellowship Program, offering help in their interdisciplinary research and creative work. The 2024-25 cohort of eight fellows included scholars from the departments of Law, Philosophy, Anthropology, Music, Journalism, Media Studies, Theater & Dance, and History.

"Having a dedicated research librarian to a program like the CAAAS Fellowship can help bring scholarly outcomes to a whole new level," said Katerina Allmendinger, success and engagement librarian, who provided support to the fellows. "These eight graduate students were already experienced scholars and many of them already had peer-reviewed research published. But they are working in original areas and a librarian has the skills to help them navigate their projects so they know they are not missing anything."

From uncovering rare archives to refining research methods, a librarian helps scholars work more efficiently, think more expansively and engage more deeply with their subjects.

"It's a model of intense academic support that we would love to expand and bring to other programs at CU Boulder," said Robert H. McDonald, dean of University Libraries and senior vice provost for Online and Extended Education. "Here, the library is doing more than providing resources. We are making a statement to students and the research community that such interdisciplinary and boundary-breaking studies get the same deep, intentional support afforded to any other field and we recognize the unique challenges and opportunities in this work."

Meanwhile, Allmendinger says she is looking forward to working with a new cohort of CAAAS fellows in the coming year, who will spend the year working on interdisciplinary research projects in Black and African American scholarship.

"We have 11 students representing disciplines such as education, history, geography, theater and dance, musicology and journalism and I cannot wait to meet them," Allmendinger said. "I am excited to hear about their research and see the interactions between them as their work develops—and of course I will be there to provide all the support they need."



CAAAS graduate students presenting at symposia hosted by the University Libraries.

Investing in student worker success

The Laughing Goat Scholarship supports students who help the Libraries thrive.

The Laughing Goat Endowed Scholarship

—generously endowed by the Laughing Goat Coffeehouse in Norlin Library—recognizes the unique contributions student employees make to fulfill and advance the University Libraries’ mission and values. Since it was established in 2020, 18 student employees have been awarded an average of \$1,400 dollars each.

“Student employees play a vital role in both the University Libraries and the Laughing Goat,” said Alyssa Cordova, assistant building manager and selection committee member.

“This scholarship honors their contributions and supports their continued success—recognizing not only their work and financial need, but also their personal and academic growth.”



Donors John Jenkins and Daryl Smith with members of the scholarship selection committee and two recipients of Laughing Goat Scholarship.

A campus job that builds futures

The Libraries are one of the largest student employers at CU.

- **175+ students employed in almost every area and function of the Libraries**
- **85% qualify for federal work study, a financial aid program**
- **69,000 collective hours of service in the past academic year**

We provide students with jobs at service desks, building management, security, archives, preservation, collection management and more. The student worker program seeks to develop and support students in academics and provide marketable skill sets for future careers. We are proud to say that many of our student workers stay with us from first year through graduation—and sometimes beyond. A few continue to work for the Libraries as full-time employees and more have pursued careers in other libraries or adjacent fields.

Tracking her path

A Libraries fellowship that framed a future



Gina Dae preserves film in the Digital Archiving and Media Preservation Lab.

When Gina Dea transferred to CU Boulder to major in Cinema Studies, she found more than engaging coursework—she found a calling.

The shift began when she met Ashlyn Velte, her course instructor and a senior processing archivist in the University Libraries.

Velte told Dea about an opportunity in the Libraries—a Media Archiving and Preservation Fellowship—and that set Dea on a journey that deepened her understanding of the impact and importance of preserving film history and ultimately shaped the course of her academic and professional journey. The year-long fellowship—funded in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services—gave her hands-on experience in preserving digital films and ultimately led to her acceptance as graduate student at New York University in Moving Image Archiving and Preservation.

“I discovered Ashlyn Velte’s digital preservation

class as part of the Cinema Studies department.

I was intrigued, and ultimately, I applied to CU Boulder because of this class,” said Dea. “I was uncertain about a career in archiving and preservation, but after taking the class, I was driven to apply for the fellowship.”

Dea’s research focused on generation loss and videotape degradation, particularly in video preservation. She worked extensively on digitizing the Libraries’ Martin Scorsese VHS tape collection which includes over 4,000 titles of commercial film and television recordings.

“My goal is to become a film conservator and curator. The fellowship’s hands-on experience made my graduate applications stand out,” said Dea. “My undergraduate thesis focused on undervalued careers of women in film and television. My hope is to build on that research at NYU.”

Congratulations, Gina!

Glenn Miller: A legacy unearthed

A year into the project, researcher interest swells as the collection becomes more accessible.

When donors made it possible for the University Libraries to hire a dedicated archivist to process the Glenn Miller Collections, they didn't just fund a position—they opened the door to discovery.

A year into that work, the results speak for themselves.

"We've never had metadata to search the collection before," said Megan Friedel, head of archives at the University of Colorado Boulder Libraries.

"These are the names, terms, or keywords used to identify archival materials.

Now, for the first time, researchers can find their way into the collection.

And we're already seeing the interest."

Thanks to this new support, Project Archivist for the Glenn Miller Collections A. R. Flynn has been working systematically through boxes that had been untouched or only loosely inventoried for decades.

The results are fully searchable finding aids in ArchivesSpace (the Libraries' platform for providing access to inventories to its archival collections), new access pathways for researchers and students, and new momentum for scholarship and teaching.

Flynn describes the work as both complex and thrilling. "We're both organizing the materials and trying to piece together the backstories of these collections. Provenance is the foundation of archival work, knowing where something came from, who owned it, and how it fits in."

The Glenn Miller Collections, held by CU Boulder since the late 1960s and now part of the Libraries' American Music Research Center archival collections, is massive and rich. It was built originally by late CU staff member Alan Cass and expanded over decades by collectors and admirers of Miller. But until now, there's been little professional archival organization.

"This collection is made up of multiple smaller collections," Flynn said. "It's not just Glenn Miller, it's about American big band history, postwar

jazz, and the people who were Glenn's peers, friends and family. We're learning new things every day."

The work has already had an impact in CU Boulder's classrooms. During a spring-semester musicology course, students got to handle original materials from the Gordon Dooley papers, including items from Dooley's time playing the trumpet

with the Glenn Miller Orchestra after World War II.

"One student was so excited, he said he couldn't believe he was holding something that real," said Friedel, who led the instruction session. "It sparked conversations about big band music, race and gender in American music history, and how we remember cultural icons like Glenn Miller. We're not just teaching Glenn Miller, we're teaching the full context."

Flynn's work is also correcting misinformation that had built up online and elsewhere due to the lack of formal cataloging. Now, researchers



Glenn Miller, *Billboard* magazine, May 16, 1942



A. R. Flynn catalogues items from the Glenn Miller collection.

know what's actually here and what's not. Inquiries are increasing, including one from someone hoping to find a mention of their grandmother, who once met Miller.

Among the collection's many treasures are several deeply personal items from Miller's time at CU Boulder:

- The original framed sheet music for "Boulder Buff", written by Eugene Novello, arranged by Fred Newman, and performed by Glenn Miller and his band.
- The first pressing of the "Boulder Buff" recording.
- Glenn Miller's Sigma Nu sweetheart pin, given to his future wife Helen Miller, (born Helen Dorothy Burger, 1902), while they were both CU Boulder students.
- Helen Miller's alumni recognition award and Glenn Miller's posthumous diploma.

"The volumes make this a complex collection,

and we are incredibly lucky to have Flynn's expertise and care," said Friedel. "Flynn is putting this puzzle back together in a beautiful way."

30 collections related to Glenn Miller—approximately 265 linear feet—have been processed and their finding aids published on the Libraries' ArchivesSpace database.

What was once a scattered set of boxes is becoming a vibrant, accessible collection—one that invites students, performers, historians, and community members to dive in and discover the full story of Glenn Miller and the American music landscape he helped shape.

And it all started with one generous gift.

2025 University Libraries Outstanding Graduating Senior

McKenna Yates

“My experience working in the library has absolutely been a highlight of my college career. I will forever be grateful to the time I have spent working here with all of the Libraries faculty and staff.” — McKenna Yates



A spark of interest turns into a passion

McKenna Yates—a student worker in the University Libraries’ Digital Media Services (DMS) lab—was selected as the 2025 University Libraries Outstanding Graduating Senior for her work on a wide range of digitization and preservation projects, her ability to connect with others and desire to take on new challenges. She was presented with this honor by Dean of Libraries Robert H. McDonald at the Commencement ceremony on May 8, 2025, earning a degree in critical media studies and sociology.

Because of her role in the Libraries, what began as a spark of interest in film quickly evolved into a passion for archiving and preserving audiovisual materials, one that has shaped her career ambitions. “Working in DMS undoubtedly changed the course of my career goals,” she said. “I have developed so many new skills in the realm of digital archiving. I will be taking these with me into my next chapter.”



McKenna Yates and Dean of Libraries Robert H. McDonald at the 2025 CU Boulder Commencement.

By the numbers 2024-2025

The Libraries drives academic achievement, expands access to knowledge and supports the future of CU Boulder students.

Every number reflects a story of seamless access to high quality information and resources, student empowerment and rigorous research. They highlight the profound impact the Libraries have on the academic community and beyond.



Visitors: 1,338,971

In 2024, the Libraries welcomed students, faculty, researchers and community members into our spaces.



Searches: 7,427,672

Over 7 million searches in one year, each one a step towards academic excellence.



Collection Titles: 7,836,850

This vast repository supports diverse academic pursuits and personal interests.



Librarian Presentations: 782

Our dedicated librarians conduct presentations sharing their expertise and research.



Electronic Books: 1,892,631

This digital collection provides convenient access to knowledge anytime, anywhere.



Presentation Participants: 17,346

Faculty, students and researchers engaged in Libraries presentations, benefiting from the knowledge of our expert librarians.

\$600,821

Open Educational Resources (OER) savings

Across the spring 2024 and fall 2024 semesters, 2,043 students saved a collective total of \$600,821 in course material costs due to the instructor's use of OER.

OER are high-quality, freely available teaching and learning materials that empower institutions to expand access, reduce student costs and foster academic innovation. OER advance educational equity and ensure that knowledge remains a public good.

Transforming spaces, inspiring minds

With upgraded classrooms and inclusive design, the Libraries are building environments that inspire every learner.



The Rare and Distinctive Collections classroom was updated in 2024.

The University Libraries support instruction and outreach through adaptable, accessible and inclusive spaces. In the past two years, classrooms and technology have been significantly upgraded to better serve diverse learners—from high school students in outreach programs to undergraduates and faculty researchers.

Starting in 2023, several Norlin Library classrooms received major audiovisual (AV) upgrades. A standout example is room E303, which hadn't been updated in over 15 years. Once visually outdated and poorly insulated, the room was rarely used. A full redesign transformed it into a state-of-the-art learning space—modern, flexible and built to inspire both instructors and students.

“I want us to continue creating inspiring spaces for learning and study because this is an investment in our community and our shared future.”

—Leslie Reynolds, Senior Associate Dean



“The new flexibility in E303, both through the furniture arrangement and new classroom technology, maximizes student interactions and collaborative work. It is a joy to teach in the space, which allows us to design collaborative and creative learning experiences for CU students.”

—Cynthia Keller, Head of Learning and Engagement Section



Cynthia Keller in the redesigned E303 classroom.

Engaging with campus arts and culture

A growing tradition, Culture Crawl brings students into the fold of CU Boulder's arts and culture scene.

Last September, 1,100 attendees visited 13 arts and culture spaces across campus including the University Libraries for the 4th annual Culture Crawl—85% of whom were students and 22% were new students to campus. Attendance doubled from that of the previous year.

The Culture Crawl is a collaboration led by the Libraries that helps students discover CU Boulder's arts and heritage academic programs and organizations in a day filled with art-making, food tastings, live music and more.



Visiting campus this fall? Join us for this year's Culture Crawl on Oct. 8, 2025.



Culture Crawl

Culture Crawl

2024



Buff One Read

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One book, countless connections

Buff's One Read brings students together through shared stories, creative expression and a sense of belonging.

One of the University Libraries goals is to empower the complete student and Buffs One Read, our signature campus program, brings this mission to life. It connects the campus community with first-year and transfer students through the shared reading of one book. This year's selection, *Solito: A Memoir* by award-winning author Javier Zamora, was chosen for its alignment with our annual theme: Courage.

Buff's One Read is more than a community reading program—it's a catalyst for creativity and connection. Each year, the Libraries host a storytelling contest that invites CU Boulder students to respond to the book's themes through original expressions of creativity. When students Anette Marmolejo, Merelyn C. and Ashley V. were named winners, their reward went beyond recognition—they had the unforgettable opportunity to meet the author whose journey had moved them so deeply.



Pictured: Dean of Libraries Robert H. McDonald, Anette Marmolejo., Ashley V., Merelyn C. and Javier Zamora.

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Cover photo: Culture Crawl 2024 event, *Charrería on Parade* co-sponsored by the University Libraries and Center for the American West

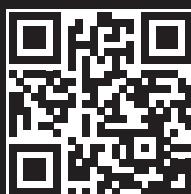
Support the University Libraries

Your generous gift allows us to continue our work to seamlessly connect our campus community with high quality information, create welcoming spaces that inspire scholarship and study, and preserve our cultural heritage.



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