



# ONTARIO COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

## ANGELA HENSHILWOOD, PRESIDENT

OCULA

2020 OCULA Membership: 576

I am grateful and honoured to be writing this message as the President of OCULA for 2020. While this year has been unbelievably challenging in many ways, our group was able to rally and has several exciting initiatives to report.

One is the creation of OCULA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee. The committee's initial priorities include creating terms of reference and deciding on the committee goals for the next few years. In order to help us determine those goals, we hosted two events in the late fall. The first was an open discussion for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) community members only, so they could have a safe space to share their experiences and ideas and to network. The second event was an open discussion for the wider academic library community. Both occasions generated fruitful discussions about EDI and how to make academic libraries safe and inclusive environments for library workers and patrons alike. The EDI Committee now has many ideas and avenues to explore for supporting EDI work in the academic library sector. I would like to thank Zack Osborne for getting this new committee started and for setting a tone of engagement, vulnerability, and compassion for the committee. I would also like to thank Heather Buchansky and Melanie Mills for taking over as co-chairs and for already showing a great vision for the group.

I want to acknowledge the hard work that went into planning our annual Spring Conference, which had to be postponed because of the pandemic. In Fall 2019, a small group began planning the event, with Abeer Siddiqui and Aliya Dalfen (both Councillors-at-Large) taking the lead. The theme selected was "Active Participants: Exploring Experiential Learning in Libraries." The conference was intended to explore how libraries can provide accessible, experiential learning opportunities to our diverse communities. A fantastic keynote speaker was engaged, engaging concurrent sessions were outlined, and plans for a fun and informative market showcase were well underway. OCULA Council hopes that a virtual version of this event can take place in 2021. Please watch out for more details.

I would also like to share exciting changes at *InsideOCULA*. Our intrepid Editor-in-Chief, Rob Makinson, expertly steered the ship on his own for several months, after saying goodbye to Jennifer Robinson, Co-Editor-in-Chief, and Thomas Guignard, Deputy Editor, who both had to depart because of exciting new job opportunities. However, Rob was able to hire several new people to the team. Welcome, Melanie Parlette-Stewart, Deputy Editor; Susan Bond, Editor; Nic Brewer, Editor; and Nicole Doro, Editor. We are thrilled to have you on board!

Finally, I must share some initiatives that are still in the planning stages but that are too exciting to pass over. Our amazing Councillor-at-Large, Abeer Siddiqui, put together an impressive proposal to create an award for BIPOC library students and a scholarship to introduce BIPOC undergraduate students to the library and information professions. The planning for this exciting award is still underway but the OLA Board is supportive and we hope to have more on this in the near future. Also, a small working group created and circulated a survey to ask OCULA members about the changes in their reference services during the pandemic. The group also gauged interest, which was high, in the formation of a "community of practice" (CoP) for those providing reference and user services. We hope to have the inaugural meeting of this group early in 2021. A huge thank you to Natalie Colaiacovo (Councillor-at-Large) and Lola Rudin and Mai Lu for all their work on this initiative.

I cannot close without expressing my undying gratitude to all the members of OCULA Council. It goes without saying that this year has been almost unbearable but the fine people who make up this Council have never wavered. They are strong, and determined and so much fun! What a gift that I get to work with you all for an extra year! Thank you!