



ONTARIO COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

GRAHAM LAVENDER, PRESIDENT

OCULA

Happy New Year! I hope you've had a wonderful holiday season, with some combination of visiting friends and family, taking time to relax, and just generally enjoying a change of pace. As 2024 unfolds before us, let's take a look back at 2023.

After a significant drop in the early days of the pandemic, OCULA's membership numbers are rebounding, as is the case for OLA's other divisions as well. I thought we should take this opportunity to reflect and make sure that our programs and activities are meeting the needs of OCULA members. This year, we started by rethinking our relationship with students. 2023 OCULA Lightning Strikes Student Award winner and OCULA Council Student Rep Jessica Hymers led our Student Engagement Subcommittee through some valuable exercises, including a discussion with several past Lightning Strikes winners to learn more about their experience giving a talk at Super Conference as a student and joining Council for a year. In response to the hesitance many students experience the first time they attend the conference, Jessica wrote the OCULA Student Guide to Super Conference. I expect future student reps will be able to update this document and continue to find new ways to make sure every student attending the conference knows about it.

InsideOCULA is an important channel for engaging with OCULA members, so this year we also considered strategies for encouraging more potential authors to submit their writing. After several years of excellent work, Melanie Parlette-Stewart stepped down as Editor-in-Chief. While we were sad to see her go, we are excited to welcome Maria Ruiz, who stepped into the role in September. Having discussed InsideOCULA with both Melanie and Maria, I'm confident that the publication will thrive in 2024.

The OCULA EDI Community of Practice continued to evolve in 2023. Co-Chairs Mikayla Redden and Benjamin Walsh led a brainstorming exercise that allowed them to organize four events on a variety of valuable topics, as part of the group's Learning Series. OCULA Council also pointed the EDI lens inward, and VP/President-Elect Matthew Rohweder led a subcommittee focused

on encouraging more diversity on Council. The group rewrote the call for nominations to appeal to a wider group of people and also found ways to share the call directly with specific communities. The result was the best turnout of nominations in a number of years; OCULA members elected three new Councillors-at-Large from six strong nominees.

Continuing the EDI theme, the OCULA Spring Conference on Decentering Whiteness in Academic Libraries was another great success. The organizing committee identified and recruited a variety of engaging speakers whose work has made a significant impact. I would like to offer a big thank you to everyone who contributed to this event, including the OLA staff who kept everything running from behind the scenes, and especially Michelle Arbuckle, who we are lucky to now have as Executive Director of OLA.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the 2023 members of OCULA Council, whose commitment and bright ideas made the year's successes possible. Zack Osborne, Past President, is someone who leads by example; while I learned a lot just watching him, he also took the time to walk me through his processes while I was VP/President-Elect and to provide sage advice this past year. Matthew Rohweder brought deep experience with conference planning in particular but also broad expertise in EDI work, and he enthusiastically stepped up as a leader in Council. I feel fortunate to have worked with him (and to continue in the coming year), and I gladly hand the OCULA presidency over to his capable hands. I was overjoyed at Super Conference 2023 when Mikayla Redden offered to fill a vacant Councillor-at-Large position and I am equally excited that she has now stepped up to be OCULA's incoming VP/President-Elect. And finally, thank you to our Councillors-at-Large, who all made strong contributions to the work of Council.

If you have any questions about becoming a member of OCULA, or participating more actively, please reach out! You can find our contact information on the OCULA Council website. I hope you have an inspiring 2024!