



R. BARBARA GITENSTEIN LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

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BALANCING THE LIBRARY EQUATION: CELEBRATING PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING LIBRARIAN VALERIE TUCCI

By Erin Ackerman

Valerie "Val" Tucci will retire on July 1 after 14 years at TCNJ's Gitenstein Library as the Physical Sciences and Engineering Librarian. Tucci came to TCNJ in 2008 after an already distinguished career in librarianship, in which she had worked in industry, library management, and the NJ State Library.

Tucci's journey to becoming TCNJ's Physical Sciences and Engineering Librarian started with great aptitude for math and sciences in high school and a subsequent focus on chemistry as she moved into higher education. After college graduation, she began her career in libraries

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working as an assistant information specialist in the library at Koppers, a chemical company. Koppers sponsored her to attend the newly opened graduate library school at the University of Pittsburgh. Tucci attended her graduate library studies in the evenings, graduating with an MLS, an Advanced Certificate in Library and Information Science, and completing the requirements for a Ph.D. but remaining ABD as she moved to New Jersey. The move to NJ was accompanied by the acceptance of the position of Library Supervisor at Colgate Palmolive in NJ and soon followed by a move to a position as Manager of Information Services and Research Quality at Air Products and Chemicals in Allentown, PA. Then Tucci decided to diversify her company library experiences and accepted a position as Librarian at the NEC Research Institute (later NEC Labs) in Princeton, with emphasis on computer science. During this period, Tucci was active as Chair of the Chemical Information Group at the Special Libraries Association and helped to establish the influential Industrial Information Managers Group (ITIMG) that was an association of technical library managers from major companies that addressed issues related to access to resources and vendor/publisher relations. Rounding out her special library experiences, Val supervised the Sci/Tech programs at the NJ State Library before joining TCNJ and the academic library community.

Tucci brought with her to TCNJ a strong understanding of science research and industry and a particular emphasis on digital resources. "As an information professional who spent many years working in industry before ever entering academe, Val Tucci brought a unique perspective to her position at TCNJ," says Gitenstein Library Dean Taras Pavlovsky. "Scientific literature in the 'hard sciences' was the first to transition from paper to online resources, and her experience 'in the trenches' while that transition was going on put her in an unparalleled position to share her expertise with TCNJ faculty and students in the schools of Science and Engineering." Tucci grew TCNJ's collection of online journals and resources in the sciences and engineering, acquiring resources such as IEEE Xplore. Chemistry professor Don Hirsh recalls that "Val got us access to more journals without breaking the budget. She understood that we really needed



rapid access to online journals" and worked to negotiate a package of American Chemical Society (ACS) journals that supported the research being done by chemistry faculty and students. "Val believes in the importance of the library serving the college community and is attuned to how the library can facilitate and advance scientific research," says Hirsh.

Partnering with faculty to support them and their students in their classes and research has been a rewarding experience for Tucci and an area in which faculty have found her help to be "invaluable," according to Chemistry professor Lynn Bradley, with whom Tucci regularly collaborated on chemistry classes. Similarly, Professor Tom Hagedorn of Mathematics and Statistics notes that Tucci has oriented "hundreds of incoming mathematics and statistics majors on how to navigate the library and its systems. Time and again, she has gone out of her way to benefit TCNJ's students and faculty." Hagedorn describes a recent example in which Tucci made sure that new books arrived by the start of the semester to support a reading project Hagedorn was doing with a student as a typical example of the "meaningful differences" Tucci has made for him and his students "countless times over the years." She has, says Hagedorn, "been a wonderful friend to me and to the entire Mathematics and Statistics Department."



Val's exemplary service to students and her engagement in information literacy instruction has been the focus of both her practice of librarianship and her scholarship. "She goes above and beyond. Val was always there as a resource for students," Bradley says. Tucci has been a critical part of the Chemistry Department's Career Development Seminar Series, teaching sessions that helped students locate and evaluate the resources they needed for their chemistry courses and beyond. These sessions were sequenced over the course of three years, allowing Tucci and chemistry faculty to build on enhance students' information literacy skills throughout their studies. "To have someone with her education and wealth of knowledge in the field was so helpful and it was always great to watch students realize that," says Bradley. Tucci, Bradley, and chemistry colleague Abby O'Connor published the results of this collaboration in the *Journal of Chemical Education*, sharing the impact of their faculty-embedded-librarian collaboration with the broader field.

Among the many aspects of academic librarianship that Tucci has enjoyed, she has found service on library and campus committees to be especially rewarding. Business and Economics Librarian Terrence Bennett observes that "Val came to TCNJ with significant relevant experience, but she was new to academia. It's been inspiring to watch her embrace the many different responsibilities that help advance the academic enterprise, such as developing a thoughtful sequence of information literacy skills modules for STEM students, and devoting so much of her time to college level committee work and other governance activities." On the library's Collection Development Committee, Val has been an advocate for increasing online journals and ebooks. She chaired the Library's Strategic Planning Committee, arranging for a strategic planning retreat that resulted in a strategic plan developed by library faculty, staff, and users. She has served on multiple campus committees, including the Promotions Committee and the Committee on Faculty Affairs (CFA). Val served on CFA at the time departments were formulating their disciplinary standards and then was chair while the college was joining the tenure and promotions process. She praises the great committee members with whom she undertook the major work around this process.

"Working at TCNJ has been fun and the people were great," says Tucci. "I've certainly learned a lot and valued the opportunity to partner with my library colleagues and science and engineering faculty." Library Dean Pavlovsky notes, as do the many faculty and librarians with whom she has worked, that Val's contributions are many and that will be missed. Music and Media Librarian Linda Dempf speaks for so many of the library faculty and staff when she says "Val has been an effective advocate for library resources in the sciences, math, and engineering, as she has built strong library collections to meet the changing needs of the curriculum and of our users. She has consistently promoted our science resources among librarian colleagues, students, and through her excellent working relationships with TCNJ faculty."

In retirement, Tucci plans to get even more involved in her township. She has been involved recently with the Stormwater Committee and its work on mitigating the effects of storms in their local area, which was hit quite heavily by the remnants of Hurricane Ida. "I love civil engineering; it's fascinating," she says. She is also involved in land preservation efforts in her area. Undoubtedly she will enhance these efforts in her local community just as she has the library and TCNJ. Best wishes to Val Tucci!



Under the Microscope: Welcoming TCNJ Health & Life Sciences Librarian Rebeca Jefferson



Dr. Rebeca Jefferson has joined Gitenstein Library as the Health and Life Sciences Librarian. Jefferson received her MA in Library and Information Science (MALIS) from UW-Madison. Her experience in libraries and information management includes digital asset management and research support at Promega Corporation, a Wisconsin-based global biotech company that makes luciferase and other laboratory products, and as a reference assistant at UW's Ebling Health Sciences Library. Jefferson holds an MD from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and was a practicing psychiatrist for eight years. In addition, she holds a specialized certificate in sexual health education and counseling from the University of Michigan. As a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, Dr. Jefferson redesigned and taught the cultural competency curriculum for second year psychiatry residents, coordinated the PTSD educational seminar series for psychiatry and pharmacy residents, and was involved in teaching cross-disciplinary course work to a wide variety of health professions students.

Jefferson spoke about her path to librarianship, and her plans for the first few months at TCNJ and in New Jersey with librarian colleague Erin Ackerman. What follows is a transcript of that conversation, lightly edited for length and clarity.

EA: You have a very interesting background, are new to librarianship, and are new to TCNJ. What brought you here?

RJ: Librarianship is an interest that has been with me for a really long time, even through my previous career. It has been shot through my medical experience, even when I was in medical school I was the person who helped switch people from Mendeley to Zotero [bibliographic citation managers]. I had been contemplating a career change for a long time. But, the thing about medical practice is that there isn't really an off-ramp. So I spent a lot of time laying the groundwork to build an off-ramp and when the time was right, I changed careers. I was always interested in leveraging my medical experience into the field of health sciences librarianship.

EA: Aren't many health sciences librarians situated within medical school libraries?

RJ: That actually connects to why I wanted to work at TCNJ, in particular, because my main interest in becoming a health sciences librarian was to take healthcare information out of the silo where it usually lives, the very specialized silo of medical schools and professional schools, and bring it closer to the community. TCNJ is a community. It's a smaller institution than where I had been previously. It serves undergraduates and graduate students. That's the kind of place where I wanted to bring health and life sciences information and be part of meeting that need—making a bridge between undergraduate and graduate studies in health and science.

EA: What's your favorite thing about being a librarian?

RJ: My favorite thing about being a librarian is discovery. And it's the fact that you're never really done. I think people have this image in their heads, and even if they haven't seen the movie *Desk Set*, which is a very old movie, people's image of a librarian is still Katharine Hepburn in *Desk Set*—the librarian being asked a question and automatically knowing the answer of every question, reciting an entire poem on the phone, while also looking up something else. That's the image people have of someone who's finished and already knows everything, but that is not the reality of librarianship and that's why I love it. You're always learning and you're always being surprised by something every day. The best thing about interacting with students, too, is how much they teach you also.

EA: True, I love that part of librarianship. What is your favorite thing about this area of New Jersey so far?

RJ: It's only been a couple weeks, but so far, I mean so far what I'm loving is the variety; it's really astonishing how ecologically diverse New Jersey is. For example, just last week I signed up for a CSA, which is a community supported agriculture program, something I've done for years in Wisconsin. The farm is less than 15 miles away, and so it intrigues me that here I am in this fairly urban/suburban area around Trenton and 15 miles away there's a farm where there's chickens and vegetables and cows. And that I can get access to that so fast, that there's all of this together concentrated in one place has just been delightful to me.

EA: Thinking about your desire to work with undergraduates, do you have advice or lessons learned for students considering the medical school path?

RJ: I think a lot of the reason that I wanted to interact with undergraduates is because I came from a family where no one was a doctor or a nurse or any kind of a health professions person. And when you come into that world, and you are aspiring to be part of that world, you don't even know what you don't know. And so I think one of the things that I really want to tell undergraduates who are considering becoming a doctor is to slow down. I didn't have a very good understanding of what I actually wanted to do, or about the differences between what different healthcare professionals do. I would say don't box yourself in too early, and stay open to the idea that you might fit into healthcare in a way you didn't expect. When I went to medical school, for example, I didn't know that there was such a thing as an advanced practice nurse midwife, and that might have been more what I wanted to do in healthcare. I'm looking forward to identifying, and adding if needed, resources to our library that will help students reflect on a medical or allied health professions career choice

EA: What are you most looking forward to working on with students and faculty at TCNJ?

RJ: You mean besides anything and everything? I'm really looking forward to being involved with the community more and potentially working with student organizations and interest groups about how the library can support them. I'm looking forward to working with faculty on their courses and on supporting their research projects. In the health sciences, and I'm looking forward to working more with the full range of fields in biology.

EA: That's right, in addition to the health sciences with which you are quite familiar, you also will be working with the Department of Biology. What excites you about working with that department?

RJ: Like so many fields, biology is not a monolith. There's so many different areas of research, and I'm enjoying the opportunity to engage with resources across these fields. I'm looking forward to learning a lot more about our faculty members' research interests and the curriculum. I'm really excited about the work being done in the School of Science around anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the science curriculum and how the library can be a part of that.

EA: Now that you're living in New Jersey, what are things that you are looking forward to seeing or doing in the New Jersey/Mid Atlantic area?

RJ: A lot of this is going to depend on what is safe to do post pandemic, but I am looking forward to seeing the ocean and there are state parks that are really, really beautiful. I'm looking forward to exploring the wide diversity of landscape that you have here. I'm also really looking forward to taking advantage of some of the cultural scene, like the New Jersey Theatre Alliance. And finding new restaurants is one of my hobbies. When people think of New Jersey, they think of pizza, and rightly so, but there's so much variety of cuisine that I've already started to find around here and I'm really looking forward to deepening that.

LIBRARIAN SPOTLIGHT

MEET THE ACQUISITIONS LIBRARIAN

Forrest Link

Building and Maintaining the Library Collections

Gitenstein Library's Acquisitions Librarian, Forrest Link, quietly sits on the third floor, helping to assemble the library's collection to meet the informational needs of the students, faculty, and staff of The College of New Jersey. Forrest manages the Acquisitions Department, which is responsible for finding and purchasing library materials.

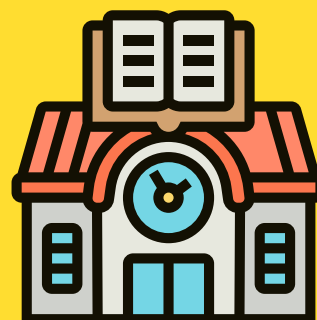
For Forrest, being an Acquisitions Librarian is a long-time dream profession. Forrest's library career began as a student worker when he was an undergraduate at Rutgers. He continued working in libraries as a graduate student, pursuing a Master's in Classics, but took a detour in 1979 when he received his Masters in Library Science. However, it was not until he came to TCNJ in 2010 where he truly built his career as a librarian. Forrest explained, "After library school, I worked very briefly as a Catalog Librarian, but fate intervened and I was given the opportunity to work in the book distribution industry. For 25 years, I traveled through the country to help academic librarians refine their collection development policies and practices."

Something drew Forrest back to librarianship, however. "During my travels, I worked directly with Acquisitions Librarians at several colleges and I noticed their unique role in the library. Plus, all of them were always so happy, surrounded by new books and smart colleagues," Forrest said. "I thought....hmm. I want to do that!" He already knew that TCNJ was a great place to work because TCNJ was one of his customers. "The Acquisitions staff is top notch here. We work very well as a team," emphasized Forrest. "I truly believe this is the best college library in the state."



The life of an Acquisition Librarian is everything he expected. "I'm sort of a professional shopper. But instead of groceries or clothes, I seek out and purchase information, materials and services that truly are the heart of the College. It's a serious responsibility handling a significant part of the Library budget, making sure the needs of our faculty and students are met, but opening boxes of books is always like Christmas morning and I spend my days with bright and interesting people."

In addition to managing Acquisitions, Forrest is the subject librarian for Classical Studies and World Language and Cultures. Forrest holds a Masters in Classics, and once taught high school Latin. Reading books, recommending books, and meeting authors are just a few perks of his job. Throughout the years, Forrest has had opportunities to meet several authors, including Simon Winchester, Neil Gaiman, and, most notably, Rosa Parks. In his spare time, Forrest enjoys singing, sampling fine wines, and, of course, reading. His latest book recommendations: *The Overstory*, by Richard Powers and *How High We Go in the Dark*, by Sequoia Nagamatsu.





Andrew Haze

**Undergraduate Major: Computer Science
Class of 2009**

Access Services: 2005-2009

**"COLLECT ALL THE EXPERIENCE YOU
CAN. EXPERIMENT WITH YOUR CRAFT,
APPLY FOR INTERNSHIPS, VOLUNTEER
IN YOUR COMMUNITY, DIVE INTO
CREATIVE OUTLETS, GO TO
NETWORKING EVENTS AND
CONFERENCES IN YOUR FIELD. FIND
WAYS TO TEST AND APPLY WHAT
YOU'RE LEARNING. TEMPER THE
KNOWLEDGE YOU'RE ACCUMULATING
WITH EARNED WISDOM."**



Andrew married Sharma Scott in 2017 at nearby
[Grounds for Sculpture](#).

Photo by: [Nana Annan Photography](#)

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Finding a Niche in Information Technology

If you like working in a field where one is constantly developing, adapting and applying skills rapidly in many areas of businesses, the field of Information Technology (IT) might just be for you.

Just ask Andrew Haze, 2009 TCNJ alumni and former Gitenstein library student worker. Since graduating, Andrew has successfully performed essential IT roles for various industries such as web producer for TripAdvisor, an online travel company and an analyst for BlackRock, an investment management corporation. "Through my career I came to appreciate the importance of continuous learning. Education doesn't end after graduation - especially in technology where the only constant is change," said Andrew.

Andrew currently works at AmersourceBergen, a pharmaceutical distributions company. They handle the supply chain between pharmaceutical companies like Bristol Myers Squibb and retail pharmacies like Walgreens. "My role supports the ordering platform that pharmacies and hospitals use to order medicine from AmerisourceBergen," added Andrew.

Working at Access Services was an important part of his education at TCNJ for a number of reasons. Andrew explained, "First, our Access Services Manager, Debbie Bailey, and the scheduled staff supervisors always made us feel appreciated for our contribution. For instance, when Debbie gave us big projects, all the supervisors (Debbie, Dina, Katy, Pratibha, and Sunny) made the effort to celebrate the completion of these projects. They nurtured a familial vibe among the staff behind the desk. We festively celebrated our accomplishments. Second, the circulation desk is at the heart of the library. It allows for ample practice in developing customer service and interpersonal skills. It was great for pulling me out of my head as an introvert."

Andrew's advice to TCNJ students: "Collect all the experience you can. Experiment with your craft, apply for internships, volunteer in your community, dive into creative outlets, go to networking events and conferences in your field. Find ways to test and apply what you're learning. Temper the knowledge you're accumulating with earned wisdom."

LIONS ROAR!

FOCUS ON STUDENT WORKERS

EACH SEMESTER, R. BARBARA GITENSTEIN LIBRARY EMPLOYS A LARGE NUMBER OF STUDENT WORKERS WHO WORK IN ACCESS SERVICES, MEDIA SERVICES, INTERLIBRARY LOANS, LATE NIGHT, LIBRARY AUDITORIUM AND LIBRARY DEAN'S OFFICE. LET'S GET TO KNOW ONE DEAN'S OFFICE STUDENT WORKER!

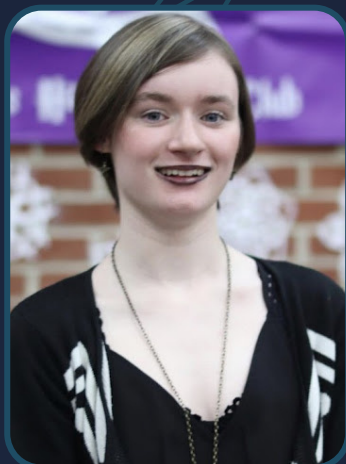
CAROLINE GEOGHEGAN

ENGLISH WITH A CREATIVE WRITING MINOR
5-YEAR PROGRAM
LIBRARY DEAN'S OFFICE
CLASS OF 2024

Interviewer:

Hi Caroline. Tell us about your studies at TCNJ.

Caroline: I am enrolled in the five-year MA in English. I am majoring in English with a creative writing minor.



I have always been drawn to creative writing and the literary world. Telling a story through various words is exciting.

In particular, poetry allows you to create imagery. You take a line of poetry and then you build upon that line and create more meaning.

In addition, I am a member of TCNJ Sigma Tau Delta, International English Honor Society. My original poetry, *Convenience Store* was published in the 2022 *Sigma Tau Delta Rectangle*. I recently presented both the poetry and an academic paper, *American Nightmare in Albee's The American Dream* at the Sigma Tau Delta Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. The paper analyzes this famous play and argues that Albee is satirizing capitalism.

Interviewer: That is very exciting. What would you like to pursue after graduation?

Caroline: I would like to pursue a career in publishing or copywriting.

Interviewer: Do you have any good book recommendations for our readers?

Caroline: *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt, a psychological thriller and *Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado, a short story collection.

Interviewer: What else do you enjoy about TCNJ?

Caroline: I enjoy the sense of community I get from my major's department. One of my favorite professors is Dr. Juda Bennett from the English Department. He is retiring, and I was in the last class he taught, Topics in English: Hippie Bookshelf. I learned a lot from him. I also enjoy TCNJ's student organizations. For example, I am part of the Mixed Signals Improv Troupe, and Ink, a creative writing club.

Interviewer: Caroline, let me give a shout-out to the Mixed Signals Improv Troupe. They have been performing in our library auditorium for many years, and they never disappoint an audience with their talent. We are so happy they came back last semester to entertain the campus community.

Caroline: Check out <https://www.instagram.com/mixedsignalstcnj/>.


Interviewer: Last question for you – what advice do you have for your TCNJ peers?

Caroline: Take healthy risks. College is a space to go outside your comfort zone. It is a place to learn and grow. Become involved with extracurricular activities if you can. This is where you really meet and connect with others.

Interviewer: Thank you so much Caroline.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Meet Sharon Austin of Access Services Service with a Smile



Introducing Sharon Austin, Technical Library Assistant, who supports Gitenstein users with a smile each day. Sharon is part of the Library's Access Services Department, located on the first floor of the library. This department provides borrowers with library materials, including conducting interlibrary loan (ILL) transactions (requesting materials owned by another library) to complete requests.



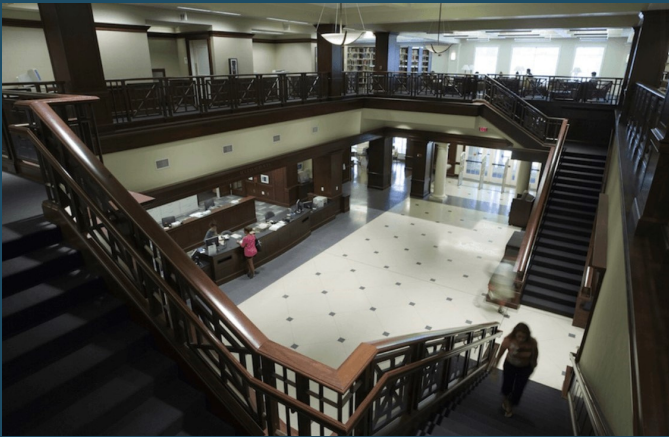
Every day, Sharon and ILL staff quietly fulfill a number of interlibrary loan (ILL) requests. "If you are looking for a book, article, book chapter, or other research materials not owned by TCNJ, we will do what we can to get the item for you if you process a request through ILL," said Sharon. This is no small task. ILL may receive anywhere from 10 – 30 requests a day. These include requests to find materials outside of the Gitenstein library and requests to send materials to partner libraries. This process includes finding items, scanning document packing, pulling books, packing, etc. "We want our patrons to receive their requests as soon as possible. We pride ourselves in delivering these services. I really do enjoy customer service so finding the things requested makes me happy," added Sharon.

In addition to completing ILL requests, Sharon shares supervising responsibilities in Access Services Desk to ensure exceptional in-person customer service. Sharon's exceptional customer service skills come from her 30 years of library service. She previously worked for Trenton Public Library. In 1997, she joined TCNJ, then named Trenton State College, supporting the Public Services Librarians. In 2009, she joined the Access Services Desk, then she moved to the Interlibrary Loans section of Access Services. She also enjoys working with student workers, and reminds all students to "Cut yourself some slack. Don't feel like you have to do everything at once, relax and take it one thing at a time."

A little-known fact about Sharon is that she used to work in a bookstore and enjoys giving book recommendations. One of her favorite book genres is true crime. In addition to reading these books, she enjoys listening to true crime podcasts such as *My Favorite Murder* (which is actually a comedy). She also loves tv shows such as *Snapped* and *Fatal Attraction*. "I think it is the psychology of why people do what they do," emphasized Sharon. She also enjoys watching horror movies (especially found footage!) and spending time with her cats (Smokey & Chyna).



Come sit and study with us!



Did you know that the R. Barbara Gitenstein library is a five-story, 135,000 square-foot facility? This is a lot of a space! The library was designed with a number of seating options available to users.



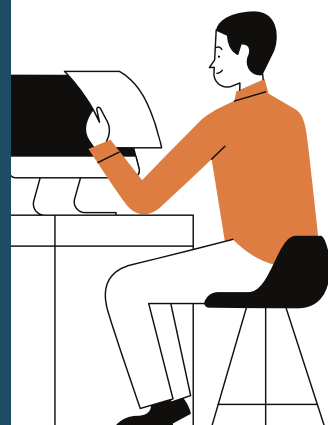
Check out our comfortable lounge chairs located throughout the building.



The library contains 26 group study to rooms for collaborative work. Download the TCNJ Library App so you can see what rooms are available in real time. (see ad on page 9)



Need a computer? Study in one of two library labs located in the lower level.





Spread out your materials on one of our tables located throughout the building.



Study independently in one of our study carrels located on the lower level, first and third floors.



Floors two, three and four contain round tables located throughout the out areas of the floor.



We are looking forward to seeing you!

NEW! TCNJ Library App



View study room
availability in real
time!



TCNJ THE COLLEGE OF
NEW JERSEY

CONTACT YOUR LIBRARIAN

Librarians can help you wrap up your semester! With reading days and finals coming up, remember there is more than one way to contact a librarian. You can find Reference hours on our website at <https://library.tcnj.edu/about-the-library/hours-of-operation/>.

Text your Question: SMS: (609) 482-3981



Librarians are available during Reference hours.
Regular text messaging rates apply.

Schedule a Research Consultation



Librarians are available for virtual research consultations and instruction. Check the list of *[Librarians by Subject/Major](https://library.tcnj.edu/research-help/contact-a-subject-librarian/)* (<https://library.tcnj.edu/research-help/contact-a-subject-librarian/>) for assistance.

Submit your Question by E-mail



Librarians will respond during Reference hours.
For questions submitted after hours, librarians will respond when Reference opens.

Ask Your Question by Chat



Librarians will respond during chat hours. If chat is unavailable, you may ask your question by email instead.



CLICK HERE TO ASK A LIBRARIAN



REGULAR LIBRARY BUILDING HOURS

Main Library Building

Monday-Thursday 7:30 AM - Midnight
Friday 7:30 AM - 6:00 PM
Saturday 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM
Sunday 11:00 AM - 11:00 PM

Extended Study Area

Monday-Thursday Midnight-2:00 AM
Friday 6:00 PM - 2:00 AM
Saturday 7:00 PM - 2:00 AM
Sunday 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM
& 11:00 PM - 2:00 AM

For hours of other services & library special hours, please visit:

<https://library.tcnj.edu/about-the-library/hours-of-operation/>