

Alan Karass

Experience

Dean of Libraries, Professor (tenured) | Columbus State University | Columbus, GA

August 2019 – Present

- Provide leadership in all areas of management, human resources, programming, services, and development for the Simon Schwob Memorial Library, Music Library, Art Resource Library, and Archives and Special Collections.
- Manage library staff of twenty-four; responsible for hiring, professional development, and performance appraisals.
- Supervised \$5M renovation of Simon Schwob Memorial Library.
- Prepare, oversee, and administer \$2M library budget.
- Develop, oversee, and review library technology initiatives.
- Establish, implement, and assess library policies.
- Facilitate the libraries' long-term strategic planning process.
- University representative on the Georgia Regents Academic Committee on Libraries (Statewide Consortium).
- Faculty member, Schwob School of Music, Search Committee for musicology faculty.
- Taught undergraduate classes: "Music in Columbus, GA"; "Music of the Arab World"; "Readings in Ethnomusicology"; "Writing about Music"; and "Rhetoric in Early Music".
- Created and led January Term Study Abroad program in Tunisia.
- Member of: Academic Council; University Curriculum Committee (Chair, 2022-23); Library Committee; Council of Deans; International Education Scholarship Committee; Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Governance; Transfer Student Task Force; Academic Center for Tutoring Advisory Council; Research, Scholarly and Creative Endeavor Task Force; Dean of Graduate Studies Search Committee (Chair, 2021).

Director of Library Services and Faculty Member | New England Conservatory | Boston, MA

February 2015 – June 2019

- Managed library staff of ten; responsible for hiring, professional development, and performance reviews.
- Developed and monitored \$1M library budget.
- Supervised library technology initiatives including print management system, streaming technology platform, institutional repository, and open-source library management system.
- Implemented and assessed library policies.
- Fenway Library Organization (FLO) Board Member.
- Facilitated the library's long-term strategic planning process.
- Planned the relocation and unification of libraries into the new Student Life and Performance Center; implemented staff reorganization as part of this transition.
- Extensive work with Institutional Advancement resulting in cash and in-kind gifts valued at over \$1M.
- Member of Faculty Council, Faculty Senate, Doctoral (DMA) Committee, Reaccreditation Task Force Steering Committee, and Title IX Review Team.

Librarian and Lecturer | College of the Holy Cross | Worcester, MA
September 1994 – February 2015

- Managed all aspects of a branch Music Library including reference, instruction, acquisitions, interlibrary loan, cataloging, budgeting, technology support, and staff supervision; principal liaison to Music Department (1994-2015).
- Supervised the Rehm Library, a branch library that served as the public space for the College's Center for Religion, Ethics, and Culture; served as liaison to the Center's faculty, staff, and visitors. Managed all aspects of collection management, staff supervision, and technology support (2001-2015).
- Taught courses in Music Department and supervised Capstone projects (2004-2013).
- Adjudicated cases as member of the College's Community Standards Board (2005-2015).
- Served as a librarian for the College's Montserrat Program; planned, implemented, and assessed specialized instruction and programming for first-year students (2007-2015).
- Served as library representative to the College's Library Director Search Committee (2009).
- Participated in the Reference and Instruction Team; created and reviewed reference and outreach initiatives (2010-2015).
- Served as Chair of the Organizational Redesign Task Force as part of the library's strategic planning process (2012).
- Implemented Music Library renovation; re-engineered traffic flow and replaced all furniture and computers (2012).
- Led summer study tour groups to Tunisia and supervised student research projects as part of an initiative funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (2012-2013).

Library Assistant | College of the Holy Cross | Worcester, MA
November 1992 – September 1994

- Supervised all circulation and reserve desk functions including hiring, training, and management of student staff.
- Processed new acquisitions.
- Copy cataloged recordings and scores.
- Answered reference questions.
- Diagnosed and fixed equipment and computer problems.
- Provided instruction on emerging technologies to library staff members.

Education

- Ph.D., Ethnomusicology | The Open University | Milton Keynes, UK | March 2015.
- Certificate, Modern Standard Arabic | Insitutut Bourguiba | Tunis, Tunisia | July 2009.
- M.A., Historical Musicology | University of Connecticut | Storrs, CT | May 2004.
- M.S., Library Science | Simmons College Boston, MA | December 1994.
- B.A., Music | Clark University | Worcester, MA | May 1987.

Selected Publications

- ““Why Do You Want to Talk to Me About Music?” The Art of Explaining Ethnomusicology in the Field” in *Oxford Handbook of Public Musicology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2025.
- Book review. Feldman, Walter. *From Rumi to the Whirling Dervishes: Music, Poetry, and Mysticism in the Ottoman Empire*. Edinburgh University Press, 2022. *American Recorder* 66(2), 2023.
- “Classical, Traditional, and Popular Music of Egypt and North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia” in *A Basic Music Library*, 4th edition. Chicago, IL: ALA, 2018.
- “Identity, Music, and Festivity in Southern Tunisia” in *Oxford Handbook of Musical Identities*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- “Canon, Cultural Memory, and Positive Knowledge in Humanities Education”, *Music Reference Services Quarterly*, 10(3-4), 117-126.
- “Journals of the Century in Music”, *Serials Librarian* 39(3), p. 103-132.

Selected Papers and Presentations

- *A Student-Driven and Student-Centered Approach to Engagement in the Columbus State University Libraries*. Keynote Presentation. Eurasian Academic Libraries Conference, October 19, 2023. Nazarbayev University, Astana, Kazakhstan.
- *The Soundtrack to the Assassination of Chokri Belaid*. Columbus State University Faculty & Graduate Research Conference. November 2, 2022. Columbus, GA.
- *I Listen to Him Singing: An Assassination and the Convergence of Two Songs*. Creative & Artistic Encounters in the Western Mediterranean Conference, University of Aberdeen. September 6, 2022. Aberdeen, UK.
- *Status, Reputation, and Showmanship Among Zokra Players in Southern Tunisia*. British Forum for Ethnomusicology Conference, April 8, 2022. The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK.
- *9 Manuscripts, 13 Strings, and a 10th-Century Islamic Philosopher: The Mystery Behind a Musical Instrument Illustration*. Columbus State University Faculty & Graduate Research Conference. November 3, 2021. Columbus, GA.
- *Transforming Failure into Success*. Columbus State University Graduate Writing Retreat. October 2, 2021. Columbus, GA.
- *Social Media, Ethnography, Fieldwork, and Relationships*. Columbus State University International Learning Community Lecture, September 7, 2021. Columbus, GA.
- *Snake Charming in Tunisia: Myth, Method, Music, and Memory*. Columbus State University Faculty and Graduate Research Conference. November 4, 2020. Columbus, GA.
- *Khadra and Jezia in Douz: Revisiting the Hilalian Sagas on the Festival Stage*. International Council for Traditional Music: Arab Music Study Group Symposium, January 7, 2019. Cairo, Egypt.
- *Open the Doors: Songs of Child Welfare in Tunisia*. Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting, October 27, 2017. Denver, CO.
- *What's Next: The Future of the Academic Library*. October 18, 2017, Wentworth Institute of Technology, Boston, MA.

- *Preserving a Legacy: Florence Brunnings and the Folk Song Society of Greater Boston (FSSGB) Collection at the New England Conservatory*. New England Music Library Association Conference, June 2, 2017, MIT, Cambridge, MA.
- *Healing, Ritual, and Music in Tunisia: A Journey through Practices, Communities, and Personal Stories*. Pain: Cellular to Social Implications for Music Therapy & Medicine, April 24, 2017, The Louis Armstrong Center for Music and Medicine at Mount Sinai Beth Israel, New York, NY.
- *Singing Hasta Siempre, Comandante in Tunisia: Images of Che Guevara after the Arab Spring*. Songs of Social Protest Conference, April 29, 2015, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland.
- *From Yerevan to Watertown: The Search for Authentic Armenian Music on Both Sides of the Atlantic*. British Forum for Ethnomusicology Conference, October 19, 2013. Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK.
- *YouTube as Teacher and Archive*. British Forum for Ethnomusicology Conference, April 6, 2013. Queen's University, Belfast, UK.
- *I Remember ... Personal Collections as National Treasures* (poster session). International Association of Music Libraries and Documentation Centres Conference, July 24, 2012. Montreal, QC.
- *Sufism and Modernity in Southern Tunisia: The Aissawa Brotherhood of Kebili*. Open University Music Postgraduate Research Day, March 27, 2012. Milton Keynes, UK.
- *The Boussadia and the International Festival of the Sahara*. Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting, November 11, 2010. Los Angeles, CA.
- *Festivals in Tunisia: Music, Cultural Identity, and Geography*. International Association for the Study of Popular Music Canada (IASPM-Canada), Going Coastal: Peripheries and Centres in Popular Music, Dalhousie University, June 12, 2009, Halifax, NS.
- *Conquer Your Peer Fear: A Mock Peer-Review Workshop*. American Library Association Annual Meeting (Association of College & Research Libraries, Distance Learning Section), June 23, 2007, Washington, DC.
- *Canon, Cultural Memory, and Positive Knowledge in Humanities Education*. Fourth International Conference on New Directions in the Humanities, July 5, 2006, Tunis, Tunisia.
- *Getting Published: Talking to the Editors*. Music Library Association Annual Meeting (Bibliography Roundtable), February 15, 2003, Austin, TX.

Awards & Acknowledgements

- Columbus State University. Educator of the Year Nominee. 2022.
- International Festival of the Sahara. Special Recognition Award for Research on the Festival and Cultural Practices in Douz. 2017, 2019.
- Andrew W. Mellon Foundation & College of the Holy Cross. Summer Research Fellowship. 2012, 2013.
- College of the Holy Cross. Faculty Research & Publication Grant. 2011, 2013, 2014.
- The Open University. Postgraduate Research Grant. 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013.
- College of the Holy Cross. Ruettgers Fund Grant. 2008.
- American Recorder Society. Andrew Acs Scholar. 1990.
- Clark University. Robert P. Manero Memorial Music Award. 1987.

Professional Service & Affiliations

American Institute for Maghrib Studies, 2007-

American Library Association, 1993-American

Musicological Society, 2008-

American Recorder Society, 1990- (Honorary Lifetime Member)

- Director, 2000-2008
- President, 2002-2006

British Forum for Ethnomusicology, 2011-

Digital Commonwealth, Director, 2016-2019

- Conference Committee, 2017-2020
- Nominating Committee, 2017-2019
- Outreach and Education Committee, 2016-2017
- Vice-President, 2018-2019
- Membership Committee, Chair, 2018-2020

Fenway Library Organization (FLO), Director, 2015-2019

- Personnel Committee, 2016-2019

Georgia Library Association, 2019-

International Council for Traditional Music, 2018-

International Association of Music Libraries and Documentation Centres, 2000-

Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society, 2016-

Music Library Association, 1993-

- Archivist Search Committee, 2017
- Bibliography Roundtable Coordinator, 2005-2009
- Development Committee, 1999-2004 (ex officio)
- Education Committee, 2004-2010
- Liaison to American Library Association, 2004-2008
- Membership Committee, 1999-2008
- Organizational Liaison Committee, 1999-2004 (ex officio)
- Outreach Subcommittee, 2004-2008
- Publication Award Committee, 2015-2018, Chair, 2017-2018
- Publications Committee, 1999-2004
- Publicity Officer, 1999-2004
- Publicity Officer Search Committee, 2007-2008

Music OCLC Users Group, 1993-

Society for Arab Music Research, 2010-

Society for Ethnomusicology, 2008-