Good afternoon, everyone. Before I begin, I would like to tell you a little about myself for those of you who don’t know me.

I have worked at Governors State University for almost 12 years. I am also a student at GSU. This semester I will be completing a master’s degree in Communication Studies. I’ve been looking forward to this opportunity to talk with you about OPUS and the University Archives.

But first, I would like to briefly talk about OPUS and our students. I was very touched by President Maimon’s Town Hall Meeting yesterday and the commitment to our students’ needs. Although that is not the focus of our presentation today, I would like you to know that doing something for our students was one of the major reasons we purchased this software called Digital Commons. We needed to find a way to showcase our students’ theses and capstones online and Digital Commons was the answer. Currently we have 165 capstone projects and 70 theses posted to our OPUS website on Digital Commons. These student works receive global exposure and have been altogether downloaded over 27,000 times as of this morning. (11,750 theses and 15,291 capstones). Additionally through our participation in the Digital Commons network, our students have access to the research of other institutions worldwide. I truly believe this is an important library initiative on behalf of our students.

[SLIDE ONE]

Now back to the topic for my part of today’s presentation - GSU history and the University Archives. As I mentioned I’ve worked here for more than a decade and one of my passions during that time has been learning about the history of Governors State University. I first became exposed to it through my work in digitizing the university newsletters and student newspapers collections. I’m excited to show you today what has been done in anticipation of the university’s 50th anniversary.

[SLIDE TWO]

But first I’m going to give you a pop quiz. Did you see that one coming? (smile) Here are some sample questions related to the history of GSU. Do you know any of the answers?

What would you do if someone put you on the spot asked you about the history of GSU?

[SLIDE THREE]

This is a Library Research Guide I created for making our university’s history accessible to the campus community. On this first page here, you can find information about the GSU symbol. By
the way, this image here is a scan I made from an original ink drawing of the symbol which I came across in the archives among President Engbretson’s materials. The links in the guide open up to the primary resource material found on OPUS and our Digital Collections.

On the tab for Mini-Campus, you can find the answers to questions 2-4 - about the first day of classes, the first class, and the first student. For those of you who may not know, the Mini-Campus was the name for the warehouse where the University held classes before the permanent campus (where we are now) was completed.

On the tab for Innovative Education, you can find a guide to such GSU-isms as Learning Module and SIM. As you can tell, there is much more to this guide and if you are interested, I would encourage you to visit this site and explore. The URL is libguides.govst.edu/GSUhistory. You can also find it by going to the library home page on the GSU website and clicking on the quick link for Research Guides. Once you are there, you will find it listed in the Other Subject Guides category.

[SLIDE FOUR]

The point of the GSU History Research Guide is to place context around the information with reference links back to the primary sources. Now, I’d like to show you where this material can be found within OPUS.

Home page for Catalogs - OPUS also allows for some text information to be posted and you can see how I have used that here to convey the history of the catalog and importantly what years the catalogs were not published.

Home page for Commencements - Our main resource here are the commencement programs which are an important archival collection. Recently Penny Perdue gave me her copies of the honorary degree citations to add here. The link about learning more leads back to the GSU history guide’s tab for commencement. Also, thanks to Penny Perdue, I have begun adding images and anticipate this collection to grow.

The student newspapers collection is one of our significant achievements. We have all issues of the first newspaper called The Innovator digitized and added to OPUS. This collection is frequently used to answer archives questions. As you can see in the left-hand side bar there is a search box. Because of the library’s work in preserving this collection, we have made a connection with the staff of the Phoenix, the current student newspaper. Last semester, we worked hard to add their past issues to OPUS as well. We are working with them to become part of their publishing workflow so we can receive a digital copy for OPUS after it is distributed on campus in print. Again, as I mentioned at the beginning, preserving and showcasing student work is an important mission of the library archives.
University Newsletters - this is one of my favorite collections in OPUS. I had some fun including the mastheads and information on where the publication names came from. I also enjoyed reading the issues as I scanned them and learning about how our university has developed over the years. Like the student newspapers, this collection is an excellent archives resource for who, what, where, and when type of questions.

Last year, the Library was approached by the Center for Performing Arts to collaborate on a project to mark their 20th anniversary. My part in this was to create a digital archive of the performances. This collection called Center for Performing Arts Memorabilia is an alphabetical listing of the shows. But I wanted to do more for them, so I created a season by season listing as well. I included their schedule of shows at the top and then the associated playbills appear below. Most of the material I received from the CPA but two of their ushers also supplied materials. As part of the ongoing collaboration between the Library and the CPA, there will be a Family Reunion event for the ushers in April where we hope to obtain more materials to include in OPUS. Another way that the Library played a part was in digitizing images from our historical photographs. On this page, you will see images of the donors who gave money to get the theater built and images from the groundbreaking ceremony. Like the commencement images collection shown earlier, I anticipate that this collection will grow as more materials are obtained.

I want to briefly mention the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park as I had it included on this slide too. Today a professor from the Art Institute is visiting campus to do research on the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park and the development of University Park in preparation for a paper she will present at the Midwest Art History Society this spring. It has been my joy to locate materials for her and share what has been posted to OPUS.

The question I want to leave you with today is

What would you like to see added to OPUS’ archives collections?

I’m handing out my business card along with an OPUS bookmark so you can contact me in the future about working together on building the OPUS digital archives. Thank you so much.