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# LISTEN

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE  
ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE LIBRARY  
AND INFORMATION SCIENCE STUDENTS  
(AGLISS)

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## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Dear LIS Students,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 academic year! Whether you are a new or returning student, we are delighted and honored you have chosen to work with us in pursuing your career in LIS. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has created uncertainty for all of us, it is still an exciting time to be an information professional. You are in an incredibly dynamic field in which you can address some of the world's most pressing challenges. In an era of increasing complexity, librarians and information professionals are on the front lines as those who are interested in promoting and safeguarding knowledge. As professionals, we combat misinformation and disinformation, we advocate for social justice, information access, information literacy, and privacy.

As a Department, we have several outstanding events this academic year.

- On **October 21st** at 6pm, we are holding our second annual [Sr. Thea Bowman Social Justice Lecture](#), with speaker, Dr. Nicole Cooke. You do not want to miss this! Please [register](#).
- On **February 19th**, we will host our 13th annual [Bridging the Spectrum Symposium](#) where Richard Reyes-Gavilan, the Executive Director of the DC Public Library, will be our keynote speaker.
- Our alumni association is diligently planning our annual Elizabeth Stone Lecture this spring with Trevor Owens, the Head of Digital Content Management at the Library of Congress. A date will be announced soon.

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR (CONTINUED)

Although the social justice lecture and the symposium will be virtual, we are hopeful that we will be able to gather as a community soon. Please know I would be happy to meet with you if you want to talk with me individually. Starting this month there will be monthly informal meetings. Our first [Zoom in with the Chair](#) meeting will be held on Wednesday, **October 7th** at 1:00-1:45pm via Zoom. These monthly sessions will allow you the opportunity to catch up with classmates, hear about what is going on in the Department, or simply share good news about a job or adopting a new pet. There may be appearances from special guests from time to time. It is my pleasure to welcome you to this new academic year — I hope you know we are thrilled that you are here and look forward to growing in the dynamic profession with you!

With best regards,  
Renate Chancellor  
Chair and Associate Professor  
Department of Library and Information Science



Dr. Nicole Cooke

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Students,

Congratulations and welcome to all the new and returning students in the Library and Information Science (LIS) department at the Catholic University of America (CUA). It is my great privilege to take on the leadership role of the Association of Graduate Library and Information Science Students (AGLISS) and to keep up its activities during this unusual academic year.

AGLISS is one of the student organizations in the LIS department; it is the student chapter of the American Library Association (ALA). The goal of this organization is to enrich academic, intellectual, and professional growth and to develop and promote social interests and relationships among students, faculty, and alumni. AGLISS organizes various activities during the academic year that LIS students and faculty members can participate in to share learning, findings, faith, culture, professional interests, and personal stories.

AGLISS always welcomes members of the CUA community to join all the events and planning activities. I cordially invite all of you to attend the future events. Please feel free to send your feedback, comments, and inquiries to [cuaagliss@gmail.com](mailto:cuaagliss@gmail.com) or to the relevant AGLISS Officer (see pages 15–17). I look forward to meeting you all in the upcoming virtual or in-person events in the future. I wish and pray for a safe, healthy, great academic year.

Sincerely,

Nirmal Gomes



## **STUDENT PERSPECTIVES**

### **Kelly Sheeran First-semester LIS student**



*Zoom interview conducted by Nirmal Gomes and Benjamin Sussman on Saturday, September 26, 2020.*

#### ***Tell us about your education and background.***

I'm a new LIS student at the Catholic University of America, and I currently live with my husband and two daughters in Washington, D.C. In 2002, I completed a BA in psychology at the University of Chicago. I completed an MEd at North Carolina Central University in 2006 and then worked as a speech pathologist for four years. Later, I worked as a scientific editor at American Journal Experts in Durham, NC. I moved to Washington, D.C. in 2013.

#### ***Why did you choose the LIS program at CUA?***

I was looking to make a career change and thinking about LIS programs, and I saw that the CUA faculty had deep connections to the Washington, D.C. community. The university has a great reputation, too.

#### ***What do you plan to do with your degree?***

I haven't really decided yet, but I'm thinking about law librarianship or maybe working in special libraries. I think I'd also like being a public librarian.

#### ***Despite the necessity of online instead of in-person classes, do you feel like you are part of a learning community?***

I'm disappointed that I haven't been able to meet any of my professors or classmates in person yet, but I feel like my professors have done a great job of helping us communicate with each other and feel connected despite having to do everything online.

## STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

### Nathaniel Bentz First-semester LIS student



*Zoom interview conducted by Nirmal Gomes on Sunday, September 27, 2020.*

#### ***Tell us about your education and background.***

In 2020, I graduated *summa cum laude* from Mount St. Mary's University (MSMU)—a Catholic liberal arts university located in Emmitsburg, Maryland—with a History major and English minor. During my senior year at MSMU, I interned at the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's Provincial Archives. Some of the tasks that I performed included cataloguing unprocessed and newly acquired artifacts, writing posts for the Archives' blog, transcribing oral history interviews, and finding materials for patrons.

#### ***What are the strengths and challenges of virtual learning so far?***

I like having the ability to send private or non-private messages to specified students or faculty with the “chat” command; it makes it fairly simple to ask for assistance and clarification, or to schedule an appointment with faculty—all while still in the online call/class and without causing interruptions. That said, setting up my computer for an online class is not as motivating as getting ready to walk to an impressive building housing necessary resources, your classrooms, and walking inside to greet others.

#### ***What resources have you been told about?***

Both before—while visiting the CUA campus—and during the semester, CUA faculty and students told me about the Writing Center, the Mullen Library, the bookstore, and the university's Student Health Services. Moreover, orientation before the beginning of this semester gave me helpful information about the whole MSLIS program, along with information on health and safety issues during this unprecedented COVID-19 crisis.

## STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

### Brandi Marulli Third-semester LIS student



*On September 24, 2020, I sat down with Brandi, my delightful coworker in the Catholic University Archives, to ask her a few questions about her experience in the LIS program. – Mandy Bernard, Editor of LITen*

#### ***How have you transitioned from in-person to online classes?***

I admit, I wasn't emotionally prepared. I took a bunch of classes online as an undergrad—out of necessity—so one of the draws of the CUA LIS program for me was the opportunity to get to know my peers and future colleagues. In general I think it's really valuable to interact with professors face-to-face. It's also more practical, too. For example, we were learning how to code a few weeks ago in 555. Even with real-time feedback in the synchronous format, it was hard to overcome the obstacle of not being in the same room with the professor.

#### ***What advice do you have for incoming LIS students, as far as learning and career development?***

Get to know your advisor! (Mine is Dr. Choi.) And in general try to connect with the faculty. If you have a relationship with them, they'll be able to help recommend courses and—importantly—the sequence in which you should take courses. I'm really interested in theological librarianship, and I've been grateful to the CUA LIS program for permitting me to take courses outside the department—like in Canon Law. I'm pretty sure you can substitute up to 6 semester hours (2 classes) with credits from other disciplines. Also, be sure to take advantage of the fact that all of the LIS classes are held in the evening. You can spend the daytime building up your professional experience in the field!

#### ***Do you think LIS studies are suited to virtual learning?***

Yes, perfectly. When the pandemic hit, I thought the LIS department transitioned online masterfully.

# ***STUDENT AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT***

## **Gordon M. Conable Conference Scholarship**



Nirmal Gomes has been chosen by the Freedom to Read Foundation to receive the 2020 Gordon M. Conable Conference Scholarship. Through the Conable Conference Scholarship, he was able to attend the American Library Association (ALA) Virtual Conference, which was held this past June 24-26, 2020.

Due to COVID-19, Nirmal will also be able to apply this award to either ALA Midwinter 2021 (to be held January 22-26, 2021 in Indianapolis, IN) or ALA Annual 2021. Lastly, he will receive a one-year membership in the Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF).

The Conable Conference Scholarship provides for conference registration, transportation, housing for six nights, and a \$300 stipend for meals and other expenses. To learn more about eligibility, application instructions, and past recipients, please visit [https://www.ftrf.org/page/Conable\\_Scholarship](https://www.ftrf.org/page/Conable_Scholarship).



## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE



### Historical Research in the Era of COVID-19 by Jared Johnson

*Jared is in his last year of the LIS master's program. He is in the Cultural Heritage Information Management track, with a concentration in archives.*

As we all know, COVID-19 has altered the state of America, and the world, like we never thought possible. While life is slowly starting to look up, we have a long way to go before we again return to normalcy. Among the many disappointments that COVID-19 has brought are the temporary closings of libraries and archives. I don't know about you, but I for one am exhausted with everything in life going completely virtual—including historical research.

While I certainly believe in the value and necessity of research undertaken electronically, there is something about conducting research in-person that cannot be beat. I think there are two reasons for this, the first being the human element. Talking with a librarian or an archivist has the potential to foster an in-depth relationship that cannot be replicated online. Only by meeting someone face-to-face and looking him in the eye can we truly see what he is about—and the passions he possesses for his often thankless work. This includes what my archives mentor calls “content knowledge”—the in-depth understanding an archivist possesses about the collections and its informational content under his care. I know from my own research experiences that I have found a particular document I was hunting for by easily talking to an archivist who knew where else in the collection to look. I believe that this could not have happened as easily—or quite frankly, enjoyably—in an online setting.

## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE (CONTINUED)

The other reason relates to the experiences that come with visiting a library or archive. Who among us has not gotten lost browsing the stacks or combing through folders of documents until that last, disappointing announcement of *the library (or archive) is closing in five minutes. Please return all items and make your way to the front exit?* Moments like these instill in us the thrill, allure, and excitement of the hunt for information and knowledge—experiences that have been repeated for centuries by our predecessors. Furthermore, there is just something about holding a textual book or record—the thickness of a page, the beauty (or ugliness) of the recorder’s handwriting, the provenance of the item, and its informational content—that is difficult to duplicate electronically. While digitization is necessary for some access and preservation, there will never be a moment in human history where every single book or document produced by man will be digitized—it is just impossible given the volume of materials alone. We will have to visit a library or archive at some point!

With that, I am longing for the day when libraries and archives fully awaken from their COVID-19 hibernation, to be able to get back experiencing historical research the way it all began and must continue to be—in-person with like-minded, passionate, and knowledgeable human beings!





## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

### Equality and Harmony: Our Life-Long Journey by Nirmal Gomes

*Nirmal L. Gomes, MA, MSM, is President of AGLISS.*

Racism is one of the long-lasting social ills in this country and many countries across the world. Many social justice activists, leaders, and organizations have been talking and acting to overcome this social injustice. In 2018, the bishops of the United States called in a letter to “[Open Wide Our Hearts](#)” and recently President John Garvey of the Catholic University of America (CUA) highlighted the racism issue that still exists in many places and individuals. Racism can be done intentionally or unintentionally, but, whatever form it takes in the community, this kind of behavior and attitude disrespects human beings. President Garvey stated in his university community email that “According to the bishops, racism ‘arises when—either consciously or unconsciously—a person holds that his or her own race or ethnicity is superior, and therefore judges persons of other races or ethnicities as inferior and unworthy of equal regard.’ The bishops said racist actions include exclusion, ridicule, mistreatment, or discrimination, when those acts are a ‘reaction to the color of skin, ethnicity, or place of origin.’ To engage in racist acts is to fail to see the other person as a brother or sister in Christ.”

The university community is committed to address any social injustices and teach community to promote a true Christian faith in action and services. The bishops called to do more good things, live, and act according to Jesus’ teaching “Love your neighbors as yourself” (Mark 12:31). What can be greater than this command? The bishops also told the community: “The command of love requires us to make room for others in our hearts.”

## ***STUDENT PERSPECTIVE (CONTINUED)***

It is very inspiring to the community that the CUA President announced a series of activities in honor of Sister Thea Bowman, the first Black member of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and an alumna of CUA who worked her entire life to bring communities together, to promote a strong identity of Black Catholic communities, and to remind everyone to love others and live in harmony. The LIS department takes the responsibility to promote intellectual awareness on social justice issues through its Sister Thea Bowman Lecture Series on Social Justice. For the upcoming 2020 Lecture, Dr. Nicole Cooke will discuss “Decolonizing LIS: Activating Social Justice” on October 21, 2020 at 6:00 pm.

President Garvey also announced a committee that is led by Professor Regina Jefferson of the Columbus School of Law and includes members in the committee from the University faculty, students, administrators, alumni, parents, and representatives from the District of Columbia government and the Archdiocese of Washington. This initiative will help the CUA community to promote love, care, respect, and service in the community, nation, and world that can foster equality, peace, justice, and harmony.





## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

### Access Services in a Pandemic by Charles Gallagher

*Charles Gallagher is Secretary of AGLISS.*



I have been lucky enough to work in the Access Services department at Catholic University's Mullen Library for almost a year now. In that time, I have come to see the department's role as supporting and enabling patron usage of library material. When the pandemic forced the university to shut down, the department had to adjust to what is called "the new normal." For example, how does one support student success when access to print material is almost nonexistent and the student body is learning remotely? While I'm extremely fortunate to be able to continue working during the pandemic, there were still challenges with both working remotely and working in a near empty library. Providing library services changed significantly with the library shut down. Below are some of my personal thoughts on the unique challenges of providing library service during a pandemic.

First, digital resources and the ILL community proved invaluable. With all the physical collections inaccessible to patrons, the library's digital collection became vital. Items not accessible through the library's collection could be requested for Interlibrary Loan or ILL. As it turned out, not every library responded to the pandemic in the same way. Some libraries had no staff on site, limiting their resource sharing to digital items. Other institutions who had staff working on site were able to provide scans of physical items. The difference in how libraries across the country were able to respond to ILL shows how different institutions were able to respond to the pandemic.

ILL was not the only way in which CUA patrons could get access to additional materials. In the early months of the pandemic, a variety of academic publishers made their online

## ***STUDENT PERSPECTIVE (CONTINUED)***

material and textbooks free to use. The hope was that making these materials available would aid students who suddenly found themselves taking online classes. It was fascinating to see how the library and publishing communities adjusted their practices to accommodate learning during a crisis.

Working in the physical library building was also a change from pre-pandemic times. As the pandemic wore on, it became necessary for library staff members to spend time working in the building. Before the shutdown, my job focused on providing customer service to visiting patrons in a busy enough library. During the shutdown, the main goal became more about taking care of tasks which could not be completed online. Adjusting to working in a library with a limited number of people took some time.

In reflection, I think this pandemic will permanently change the way libraries view patrons' needs. While digital resources alone are still not enough to satisfy all research needs, these resources will continue to play an increasingly important role in academia. With this increased demand or importance might come increased support for open educational resources or OER. Another permanent change is how libraries address the needs of long-distance patrons. While the post-pandemic number of students learning remotely will not be as many as there are currently, there still will be distance learning students in need of library resources. Being forced to think and develop policy to address remote students' needs on such a large scale will likely improve how the library field engages and supports this community in the future. Hopefully one day soon libraries will open to patrons and in-person service will return to normal. Until then, the library field will have to continue to adjust and adapt to the unique challenges of this time.

## **AGLISS OFFICERS**



### **Nirmal Gomes, President**

Nirmal L. Gomes previously served as VP of AGLISS and will now serve as President. A Student Ambassador of the Library and Information Science (LIS) Department, he has previously earned the following degrees from Catholic University: Master of Science in Management (M.S.M.), with a specialty in Human Resources; Master of Arts (M.A.) in Higher Education; and Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Social Sciences. Nirmal's LIS concentration is in Community Service Librarianship and Digital Libraries/Academic Library Specialization. He currently works at Mullen Library. His future goal is to work for an academic library or federal agency.

### **Zoe Mann, Vice President**

Zoe will serve as the Vice President of AGLISS this year. She has an undergraduate degree in English with minors in Accounting and Computer Science. She is on the Cultural Heritage Information Management (CHIM) track and plans to specialize in either Archives or Special Collections/Rare Books. She loves reading, music, and the beach, and her future goal is to work at the Library of Congress.



### **Daryl Jackson, Past President**

Daryl is wrapping up his joint History/LIS master's degree, having completed the requirements for the History M.A. earlier this year. A Medievalist in History, his concentration within LIS is Cultural Heritage Information Management (CHIM). He received his bachelor's degree in History from the University of New Orleans in 2017. Daryl has previously worked as the graduate assistant for the University Research Day Committee and as a teaching assistant in the History department.

## **AGLISS OFFICERS**

### **Katie DeFonzo, Treasurer**

Katie has just finished her second year of the Joint Program in LIS and History at Catholic University. Her primary historical interests include Spanish colonialism and the early American Republic, and her Library Science concentration will be in Cultural Heritage Information Management. She holds a B.A. in History and Spanish Language and Literature from Fordham University, Rose Hill. Katie currently works as the graduate assistant in the Semitics/ICOR Library in Mullen Library, and she hopes to one day work in this sort of special collection.



### **Benjamin Sussman, Public Relations**

Benjamin Sussman is a member of the Web Development team for AGLISS. He currently serves as the Administrative and Facilities Management Assistant for Georgetown University's Graduate Health & Life Sciences Research Library. He received his undergraduate degree from Earlham College in Japanese Language and Linguistics and is now in his second year of graduate studies at CatholicU, pursuing an MSLIS in Digital Archivism. His hobbies include all areas of Japanese history and humanities, as well as American comic culture and digital design. He hopes to work in the digital preservation and dissemination of early American comic art to preserve its heritage.



## AGLISS OFFICERS



### Charles Gallagher, Secretary

Charles will serve as Secretary for AGLISS this academic year. He currently works as an Access Service Technician at Catholic University's Mullen Library. At Mount St. Mary's University, he earned a bachelor's degree in History and Economics in 2015 and an MBA in 2018. Since he is still fairly new to the program, he has not yet decided on a specialization. Some of his favorite hobbies include reading and walking his dog.

### Amanda Bernard, Newsletter Editor

Mandy will serve as editor of the AGLISS newsletter, *LISten*. She graduated *summa cum laude* from St. Mary's College of Maryland in 2016 with a degree in English and began working at the Catholic University Archives in August 2019 as a Graduate Library Preprofessional. An aspiring archivist, Mandy is on the Cultural Heritage Information Management (CHIM) track and expects to graduate in Summer 2021. These days she spends most of her free time walking her tri-color corgi puppy and watching true crime shows.



The foregoing officers were confirmed during the AGLISS meeting on September 4, 2020. The faculty advisor for AGLISS is Dr. Sue Yeon Syn.



Meanwhile, the SAA@CUA confirmed its new officers at the meeting on October 1, 2020.

Daryl Jackson, *President* — Jared Johnson, *Vice President*

Jess Neuman, *Treasurer* — Susan Watterson, *Secretary*

The faculty advisor for SAA@CUA is Dr. Jane Zhang.

## LIS SENATORS



### Janae Carter, GSA Senator

As senator, Janae will represent the LIS department in the Graduate Students Association (GSA). She is in her second and final year of a joint History/LIS master's degree with concentrations in American History and Cultural Heritage Information Management (CHIM), respectively. She did her undergrad here at CatholicU, graduating with a B.A. in History. She enjoys baking, going around to the museums in D.C. and elsewhere when she travels, loves learning about the First Ladies, and hopes to stay in the D.C. area when she graduates this coming spring!

### Hana Beckerle, GSA Alternate

Hana will serve as the alternate senator for the LIS department in the Graduate Students Association. Hana holds a B.A. in journalism and political science from Penn State University, and is in the Community Services Librarianship track for her MSLIS degree. She is currently working in the Electronic Resources and Services department at Mullen Library as a Graduate Library Preprofessional. Her interests include college football, reading, and birding.



Our senators represent the LIS department and LIS students in the Graduate Student Association (GSA), and are responsible for handling the department's annual allotment from the GSA student activities fund. They use these funds to reimburse our students for the cost of conference attendance and professional association dues.

**To submit a funding request, please contact Janae and Hana at [gsasensor.lis@gmail.com](mailto:gsasensor.lis@gmail.com)**

## REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS



Students who join professional organizations (such as ALA, SLA, SAA, and others) or attend LIS-related conferences and events can be reimbursed using LIS department funds through the Office of Campus Activities (OCA).

Students should email [gsasenator.lis@gmail.com](mailto:gsasenator.lis@gmail.com) and include their name, the full name of the event attended or organization joined, date(s) of the event, and a mailing address to send the reimbursement check to. Students should also attach proof of payment, which should clearly indicate the amount paid by the student to the given organization and the date of payment. PDF copies of electronic receipts, scanned paper receipts, or PDF copies of emails confirming payment are all acceptable options.

Our GSA Senator, Janae Carter, will submit the request to OCA. OCA will then contact the student requesting reimbursement to notify them if the request has been accepted, or if additional information is needed. Reimbursement checks may take a few weeks to be processed by Accounts Payable. This year, many organizations are taking their events online. Virtual conferences, lectures, and other professional events are all eligible for reimbursement through the same process.



**Please note:** if a student is interested in inviting a speaker to give an in-person lecture or having another LIS-related event on campus, these events must adhere to University guidelines for social distancing and other COVID-related safety measures in order to be eligible for department funds. For more information on hosting an event on campus, please visit <https://activities.catholic.edu/covid19/eventresources.html>.

## UPCOMING LIS EVENTS

**October 21**  
**6:00pm**



Dr. Nicole Cooke

### **Sister Thea Bowman Lecture Series on Social Justice** **“Decolonizing LIS: Activating Social Justice”**

**Dr. Nicole Cooke**

Social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are significant topics within the profession, but are they actually integrated into the fabric of library and information science? Among the areas that require particular understanding and dedication are our classrooms and pedagogical practices. Decolonizing our syllabi (and ultimately our entire curricula) requires looking outside of our discipline and Western norms to engage other scholarship and practices to build a foundation for what decolonization and a more equitable profession look like.

[RSVP required.](#)

**October 24**  
**2:00pm**

### **CUA LIS Alumni Mentorship Program**

Wanted: mentees! To be paired up with a mentor, please fill out this form **no later than October 23**: [tinyurl.com/y2nnv7tl](https://tinyurl.com/y2nnv7tl). Please contact alumna Hannah Jones ([50jonesh@gmail.com](mailto:50jonesh@gmail.com)) with any questions.

**October 27**  
**6:00pm**

### **Virtual Information Session**

The Catholic University of America’s Library and Information Science program—recently ranked top ten for job placement and average salaries by *Library Journal*—invites you to join us for an information session. [RSVP!](#)



## UPCOMING LIS EVENTS

**October 29**

**4:00–5:30pm**

### **DCSLA Career Advice Webinar Series – Resume Tips**

Join members of the Washington, D.C. Community of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) for an engaging session on resume tips for finding work in libraries and other information roles. [RSVP!](#) The event is free for SLA members and only \$3 for students.



**February 19**

### **2021: 13th Annual Bridging the Spectrum Symposium**

Bridging the Spectrum: A Symposium on Scholarship and Practice in Library and Information Science offers a knowledge-sharing forum and meeting place for practitioners, students, and faculty in Library and Information Sciences and Services. Presentations are selected to showcase innovative practices, projects, and research activities in a variety of library, archives, or information services activities. The 2021 keynote address will be delivered by Richard Reyes-Gavilan, the Executive Director of the DC Public Library. Contact the Symposium Committee with any questions: [cua-slis-symposium@cua.edu](mailto:cua-slis-symposium@cua.edu)



**BRIDGING**  
*the* **SPECTRUM**

## SLA ANNOUNCEMENT

### HELP JUMP START YOUR CAREER

by joining SLA as a  
Student Member



- Network with others in your industry
- Visit our career center to access high quality, relevant job postings
- Participate in online learning programs
- All for \$10 a year

The Special Libraries Association (SLA) would like to invite members of The Catholic University of America's Department of Library and Information Science to come and join us as we build a strong professional network of library and information professionals. The [Washington, D.C. Community](#) is the largest geographic community in the association by number of members. The rate to join for student members is only \$10. *Please note that this change was recently approved and has not been updated on all pages of the website; contact [membership@sla.org](mailto:membership@sla.org) with any questions.*

For more information about the benefits of student membership, please visit this website: <https://www.sla.org/access-membership/student-member-benefits/>.

Contact Samuel Russell ([73russells@cua.edu](mailto:73russells@cua.edu)) if you are interested, or you would like more information.