



## **Updates on Ongoing Projects Funded by the Friends**

*As of July 25, 2026*

### **PACE Grant for Texas A&M University Sesquicentennial Student Researcher I**

**Funding Approved & Payment Schedule:** \$7,260 - December 2025; \$4,620 - August 31, 2026 = \$11,880

The project will conclude in August 2026. Over the course of the project, \$9,234.31 of the \$11,880 approved was invoiced for student wages in support of archival research for Texas A&M University's sesquicentennial initiatives.

**Amount Invoiced & Payment Rec'd** - \$5,774.13

An invoice of \$3,460.18 will be sent out in August 2026.

Since the previous status report, submitted with the request for payment on December 12, 2025, there have been no substantive changes to the scope or objectives of the project. Student researchers continued to conduct archival research within Cushing Memorial Library & Archives in accordance with the original project plan.

Throughout the grant period, student employees identified, analyzed, and documented historical materials that support the university's sesquicentennial initiatives, including exhibitions, digital resources, and other commemorative programming.

The grant successfully fulfilled its intended purpose by providing dedicated student support for archival research, contributing directly to the preservation and presentation of Texas A&M University's history in advance of its 150th anniversary.

### **PACE Grant for Texas A&M University Sesquicentennial Student Researcher II**

**Funding Approved & Payment Schedule:** \$3,300 by December 12, 2025; \$9,724 by August 31, 2026

**Amount Invoiced & Payment Rec'd** : \$1,359.83

An invoice of \$8,610.49 will be sent out in August 2026.

Since our last report, two student technicians, Jvk Chaitanya and Gazia Aziz, completed appointments funded through gracious PACE Grant funding. Jvk Chaitanya graduated in May 2026 with his degree in AI and Machine learning and has accepted a position as Repository Applications Librarian at Texas A&M University Libraries starting this August. Gazia Aziz concluded her work with the Libraries at the end of June 2026. Their combined efforts meaningfully advanced the Libraries' Sesquicentennial digital initiatives and will help our users access and discover our invaluable collections in ways that would have otherwise been impossible.

Jvk worked to perfect an AI pipeline for automatic speech recognition (ASR) and handwritten text recognition (HTR) of the Libraries' special collections materials. Using the university's high-performance research computing platform and open AI models, he helped develop a pipeline to generate transcripts for oral histories, allowing the team to create and refine more than 1,000 transcripts for legacy oral

history recordings. He also helped build a viewer to aid library staff in refining transcripts, closed caption files, and subtitles. For handwritten materials, he created a pipeline for generating descriptive metadata and transcriptions of legacy manuscripts, along with a companion viewer for remediation of metadata and transcription. These efforts will allow users not only to see but search and discover our materials. Gazia supported the Libraries' migration to a new digital collections platform used to showcase rare special collections materials. This included building pipelines for migrating materials from specialty platforms into this new environment, as well as helping shape the look and feel of templates across the Libraries' various digital collection views. She also developed an initial pilot chatbot using retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) for the Libraries' student newspaper collection. This platform will allow special collections staff to ask complex questions and get responses based only on our primary sources.

### **PACE Grant for Texas A&M University Sesquicentennial Coffee Table Book**

**Funding Approved:** \$75,000 due pending upon receipt of the final invoice from Texas A&M University Press.

Work on the Texas A&M University sesquicentennial pictorial coffee table book continues to progress as planned. At this time, the project team has not received a publication or billing timeline from Texas A&M University Press; therefore, a date for submitting the final invoice is not yet available.

Since the previous report, the authors have completed and returned the Final Page Proof Review to Texas A&M University Press. The manuscript is currently in the final stages of production, with the Press incorporating remaining editorial revisions and completing the design of the book cover. The completed manuscript now exceeds 300 pages, reflecting the breadth of historical research and content developed for the publication.

The book has been featured in the Texas A&M University Press Fall Catalog. It is currently available for pre-order, and promotional efforts are underway through Texas A&M University Press and Texas A&M University MarCom. Additional features highlighting the publication are planned through the Association of Former Students and the Texas A&M Foundation, further expanding awareness of the project and its role in commemorating Texas A&M University's sesquicentennial.

All project activities continue to move forward as planned. The project team will submit the final invoice for PACE Grant reimbursement upon notification from Texas A&M University Press that the publication process has advanced to the appropriate stage.

An event with a book signing is tentatively scheduled for Spring 2027.

The retail price is \$45.00. The following discounts apply to bulk orders of the book:

- For 100-199 copies, the University Press will grant a 40% discount.
- For 200+ copies, the University Press will grant a 45% discount.

For all bulk order inquiries, please contact Kyle Littlefield at [leighton-littlefield@press.tamu.edu](mailto:leighton-littlefield@press.tamu.edu).

## **Audio/Visual/Film Inventory Student Assistant Project – Digitization Component**

**Funding Approved:** \$21,000 (\$20,000 for student wages and \$1,000 for supplies and equipment)

The remaining balance of \$2,371.63 from this project's budget, which was approved by the Friends on July 25, 2025, for use toward film digitization, remains available. These funds will continue to be combined with outside funding to support the digitization of the films identified and assessed during the inventory project.

Although work on the digitization component has been temporarily delayed, the project remains an important long-term preservation initiative. Once staffing capacity and resources become available, the combined funding will be used to digitize these historically significant moving-image assets, ensuring their long-term preservation, and improving access for research, instruction, and outreach.

## **PACE Grant for Innovation Touch Table Project**

**Funding Approved:** \$37,500 (Other funds used: Preservation Assistance Fund - \$40,000 and Madeley Endowment - \$20,000)

Work on the Innovation Touch Table has continued to make steady progress. Project staff have been working closely with the museum fabricators and software engineers to develop and refine the functionality of the interactive touch table, ensuring the application delivers an intuitive and engaging visitor experience.

In parallel with the technical development, project staff have continued identifying Texas A&M innovations, research achievements, and their historical roots for inclusion within the application. The historical content, images, and multimedia assets are substantially complete and continue to be refined as additional materials are identified and incorporated.

The project team continues to evaluate the user experience, test functionality, and incorporate feedback throughout the development process. This work is highly iterative, with content and software undergoing regular review and refinement on a weekly basis to ensure the final product is both historically accurate and engaging for visitors.

The project remains on schedule and is expected to be completed in advance of the exhibition opening on October 1, 2026.





**Report of Endowments**  
**Held at the A&M Foundation**  
*As of May 31, 2026*

**Edward & Billie Madeley – Friends of the Sterling C. Evans Library Excellence Endowment – Account #57534**

Use: Support the Libraries as determined by the head of the University Libraries in consultation with the President of the Friends.

Endowment: \$150,100

Investment Income earned annually: ~ 10,351

Income available: \$39,871\*

\*\$20,000 was transferred in March 2026 for the approved PACE Grant for the innovative touch table.

**Friends of the Sterling C. Evans Library Endowment (Abbott) – Account #57477**

Use: Supports programs and projects of the Libraries which may include capital needs and travel expenses for staff of the Libraries. All expenditures from this Fund must be approved by the chief academic/administrative officer of the Libraries, (presently the University Librarian and Asst. Provost). All reports will be provided to the Friends through the University Librarian.

Endowment: \$61,267

Investment Income earned annually: ~ \$3,565

Income available: \$49,018\*\*

\*Donations given to the income (05) side of Abbott from 2/1/2023 – 4/30/2026 may count towards the Friends Sesquicentennial Fund. The total amount available during this time period is **\$8,550**. This amount is included in the “Income Available” above and has not been transferred to 150<sup>th</sup> Project until Friends Board lets us know which 150<sup>th</sup> project they want it applied.

\*\$309 was transferred in April 2026 to cover University Libraries staff’s tickets at the Friends Annual Meeting.



### Upcoming Libraries Events

- Libraries Open House – Aug. 21, 2:00 – 4:00 PM
  - Volunteers needed to distribute t-shirts.
  - Contact Kiara Jackson at [kiaraj@tamu.edu](mailto:kiaraj@tamu.edu) to sign up.
- *A Legacy Built of Brick & Stone: Remnants of 150 Years at Texas A&M University* Exhibition at Cushing Memorial Library & Archives – Opening Sept. 18
- Sesquicentennial Signature Exhibition at Stark Galleries in the MSC – Opening Oct. 1
- Texas A&M University's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration
  - Signature Events:
    - Opening Ceremony – Friday, Oct. 2 (See website below for details)
    - Kickoff at Kyle – Friday, Oct. 2
    - Spirit of 150 Week – Sunday, Oct. 4 thru Saturday, Oct. 10
    - Sesquicentennial Speaker Series – Monthly
    - Aggie Family Parade – Saturday, April 10, 2027
    - Closing Festival – May 1, 2027
  - Visit <https://150.tamu.edu> to learn more.