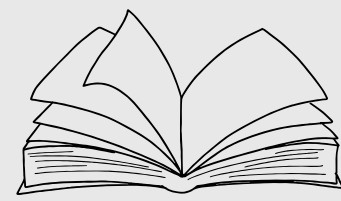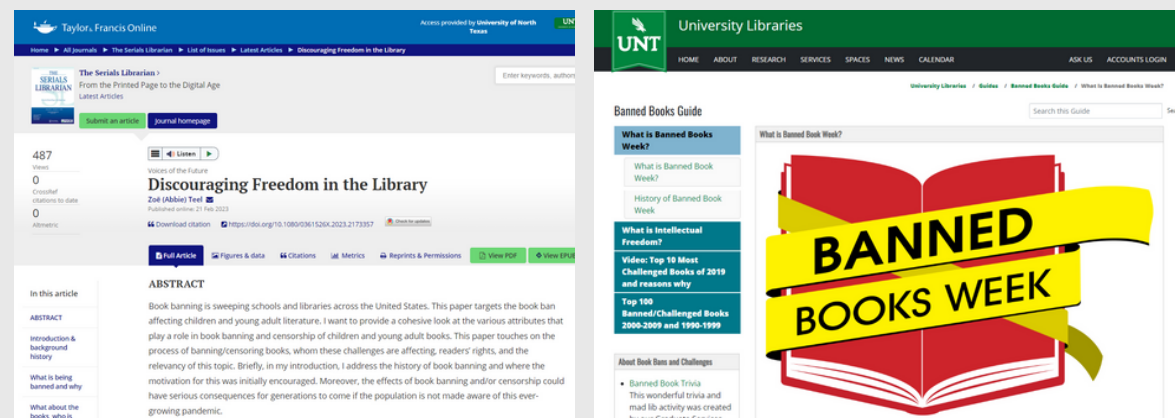# UNT COMBATS NATIONAL BOOK BAN CRISIS: A GSA PERSPECTIVE

2023 STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

Working in Access Services, at the service desk, I have seen patrons of all demographics: different races, different religions, different ages, different gender identities. Each patron deserves a right to browse and find materials that help them navigate, learn, and understand the world we live in today.

AUTHORS

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INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries have been a target of the national book ban crisis. There has been a proliferation of books that have been subjected to censorship in the last few years, especially books that deal with imperative topics such as gender identity, race, abortion, and sexuality. Books authored by individuals who are BIPOC (black, Indigenous, and people of color) are heavily under attack and face unfair, unjust scrutiny.

BANNED BOOK WEEK & GUIDE

The University of North Texas celebrates the freedom to read. Each year, the American Library Association holds "Banned Book Week," which UNT Libraries has participated in hosting. UNT Libraries has a Banned Book Guide, which explores what Banned Book Week is and its history. It also offers trivia and videos about the most challenged books and why they are challenged.

https://guides.library.unt.edu/BannedBooks

CONSIDER

Libraries are supposed to be the home of information; a place that demolishes barriers and welcomes knowledge. Academic libraries are the embodiment of intellectual freedom. Questioning why things are the way they are is at the heart of education.

How would losing access to certain literature impact you and your education?

"The unparalleled number of reported book challenges in 2022 nearly doubles the 729 book challenges reported in 2021. A record 2,571 unique titles were targeted for censorship, a 38% increase over the 1,858 unique titles targeted for censorship in 2021" (ALA, 2022).
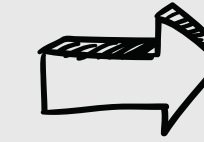
ALA American Library Association

CORRELATION TO WORK

In February 2023, during my time as a GSA, I published research regarding the book ban. My article, Discouraging Freedom in the Library (Serials Librarian Journal) explored the impact of the book ban on students. I touched on the process of banning/censoring books, whom these challenges are affecting, readers' rights, and the relevancy of this topic. Briefly, in my introduction, I address the history of book banning and where the motivation for this was initially encouraged. Moreover, the effects of book banning and/or censorship could have serious consequences for generations to come if the population is not made aware of this ever-growing pandemic.
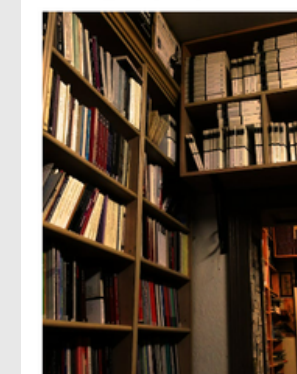
SCHOLAR SPEAK

As a GSA, we participate in writing for the UNT Blog Scholar Speak. Scholar Speak is a scholarly library blog. We are allowed the opportunity to select a topic, based on our interests, and write between 400-1000 words. The content must be scholarly, professional, and thorough. It has to be in narrative format and accessible to all user groups. This opportunity has allowed me to delve further into topics that grapple with the Book Ban.

UNT Libraries Combat National Book Ban Crisis
Written by: Zoë (Abbie) Teel

Interior of a Bookstore by Sena Kazak and licensed under Pexels

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RERFERENCES

American Library Association. (2023). "American Library Association reports record number of demands to censor library books and materials in 2022
http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2023/03/record-book-bans-2022 (Accessed April 12, 2023)