



## Wiki Education Monthly Report, September 2019



## Highlights

- This month we launched two new courses with two new partners. First, a 12-week course with the National Science Policy Network (NSPN) as part of its 2020 Election Initiative. Wiki Scientists are learning to contribute to Wikipedia in order to improve articles on scientific subjects relevant to the 2020 election. The neutral, well-sourced, fact-based material participants add will contribute to the body of knowledge voters check when making decisions at the ballot next year. We also started an 8-week course in connection with the New York Academy of Sciences. Like the NSPN course, participants are still in the early stages of the course, making minor edits and selecting their main project articles. We are thrilled with the range of scientific expertise these Wiki Scientists bring with them, selecting the kinds of articles that are difficult to edit for people without subject-matter training like sense strand, nigrostriatal pathway, graph  $C^*$ -algebra, and anterior cranial fossa.
- We made a number of improvements around how the Dashboard handles private information including better documentation of exactly what private information the Dashboard stores and why, steps for removing private information, and a way to download the private information stored about users.

## Programs

### Wikipedia Student Program

Status of the Wikipedia Student Program for Fall 2019 in numbers, as of September 30:

- 369 Wiki Education-supported courses were in progress (210, or 57%, were led by returning instructors)
- 5469 student editors were enrolled
- 62% of students were up-to-date with their assigned training modules.
- Students added 431,000 words, edited 1,450 articles, created 47 new entries, and added 4,550 references.

The **Fall 2019** term is in full swing. Students are enrolling on the [Course Dashboard](#), beginning to take the introductory training modules, and learning how to critically evaluate Wikipedia. The process of learning how to contribute to Wikipedia is as important as the contributions our students will ultimately make which is why these beginning weeks are indispensable.

Wikipedia Student Program Manager Helaine Blumenthal spent most of September ensuring that all of our courses are getting off to a good start. Running a Wikipedia assignment, especially for the first time, can be a complex project with a lot of moving parts. As part of our efforts to provide robust support, Helaine launched a Slack channel for our Fall 2019 instructors. We're

hoping that the channel will be a space where our instructors can collaborate, exchange ideas, and share tips and solutions.

We're looking forward to the next few months when our students will begin to choose their topics and make their initial contributions.

### **Student work highlights:**



*A student in Ximena Gallardo's [English Composition class](#) uploaded this photo of a St. Pats for All Parade, which has been added to the article for Woodside, [Queens](#).*

Activism and activists are an important part of the global community, as they can help bring our attention to worthy causes and peoples. This is most likely why some of the students in Kristy Roschke's [Digital Media Literacy class](#) at Arizona State University chose to edit on this topic. One of the articles was the one on [Xiuhtezcatl Martinez](#), an indigenous environmental activist, hip hop artist, and youth director of Earth Guardians, a worldwide conservation organization. Active since a young age, Martinez has spoken publicly about the effects of fossil fuels on indigenous and other marginalized communities. He is also one of the plaintiffs involved with the cases *Juliana v. United States*, where they are suing the federal government for failing to act on climate change, as well as the *Martinez v. Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission* lawsuit, which has the same aim but focuses on a state level. The other article is on [Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner](#), a poet and climate change activist from the Marshall Islands. She is a co-founder of the environmental nonprofit organization Jo-Jikum and in 2014, was chosen to address the United Nations Climate Summit and in the following year, at COP21 in Paris. Jetnil-Kijiner has also been recognized by *Vogue* magazine, who heralded her as one of the 13 Climate Warriors, and by the Earth Company, who named her Impact Hero of the Year.

Many of the edits we highlight via this monthly report are sizable edits, however it's important to recognize good smaller edits as well. One of the students in Jennie Burnet's [Culture and Change in Africa class](#) at Georgia State University chose to update the article on [slavery in contemporary Africa](#) with some updated figures on slavery and vulnerability to slavery. The introductory paragraph to the article gives a great overview of this topic area: The continent of Africa is one of the regions most rife with contemporary slavery. Slavery in Africa has a long history, within Africa since before historical records, but intensifying with the Arab slave trade and again with the trans-Atlantic slave trade; the demand for slaves created an entire series of kingdoms (such as the Ashanti Empire) which existed in a state of perpetual warfare in order to generate the prisoners of war necessary for the lucrative export of slaves. These patterns have persisted into the colonial period during the late 19th and early 20th century. Although the colonial authorities attempted to suppress slavery from about 1900, this had very limited success, and after decolonization, slavery continues in many parts of Africa even though being technically illegal.



*This is a landscape featuring Perseus and Andromeda, located in the "Mythological Room" of the Imperial Villa at Boscotrecase and was uploaded by a Fordham University student in Richard Teverson's Roman Art class.*

Suicide is one of the top ten leading causes of death worldwide. Its impact can be felt long after a successful attempt and has the potential to rip asunder lives. One of the students in Janni Aragon's [Gender and International Relations class](#) at the University of Victoria chose to edit on

this somber topic, focusing specially on suicide among Indigenous peoples, who still too often marginalized and overlooked. Suicide rates across First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities continue to be considerably higher than that of non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. A Statistics Canada survey from 2011 to 2016 found that, when comparing suicide rates of Indigenous peoples to the rest of the Canadian population, First Nations people had a suicide rate three times higher, Metis had an estimated rate two times higher, and Inuit communities were found to face a suicide rate as much as 9 times higher than the national average. A 2017 study in the Canadian Journal of Psychiatry found intergenerational trauma due to the Canadian Indian residential school system to be linked to mental health issues and suicidal thoughts and actions. Much like the Indian schools in the United States, these residential schools were created to assimilate Indigenous children into the dominant culture (in this case Canadian) and to remove them from their homes and culture - even going as far as to deny and discourage family visits. Many of the students were exposed to physical and sexual abuse. All of this served to disconnect these children from their families and culture, leaving them unable to fit into either community even as they were still exposed to racism from mainstream Canadian society. All of this led to an increased risk of suicidal ideations and attempts that could in turn impact future generations.



Scientist [Audrey H. Sawyer](#) now has a Wikipedia article thanks to our students

In September, Wikipedia finally cracked 18% for proportion of women's biographies. Increasing this number from 15.5% in 2014 has been a tremendous effort, and we're proud to support

instructors who write women into Wikipedia. One such instructor is Dr. Rebecca Barnes, whose most recent course [Introduction to Global Climate Change](#) just wrapped up. In a short 3.5 weeks, Dr. Barnes used our modules to teach students how to edit Wikipedia, resulting in an impressive 23 new biographies of women scientists! We now have articles for oceanographer [Caroline C. Ummenhofer](#), marine biologist [Anne E. Giblin](#), as well as earth scientist [Katherine Calvin](#), among many others!

Students in Joan Strassmann's [Behavioral Ecology](#) class have been off to a great start, working on articles about Diptera, the insect order that includes flies, fruit flies, and mosquitoes. The Hawaiian Islands are home to about 1,000 fruit fly species; many of these species evolved there and are found nowhere else in the world. A student in the class created an article about [Drosophila silvestris](#), one of these unique fruit fly species. Other students in the class have created new articles about [Drosophila mettleri](#), the Sonoran Desert fly, and [Aedes taeniorhynchus](#), the black salt marsh mosquito, which is a vector of a range of mosquito-borne diseases including West Nile virus, eastern and western equine encephalomyelitis, and yellow fever.

## Scholars & Scientists Program

### Wikidata

We have some exciting updates from the Wikidata program this past month. We have another beginners Wikidata course running currently. This course differs from our first round of Wikidata courses in that we have strong representation from art museum staff. We are eager to see how our curriculum and training are able to support the linked data needs of these institutions. They are eight participants currently enrolled and we are looking forward to all of the edits they will make to Wikidata. You can [follow their progress here](#).

We have also had some time to analyze the results of our first round of Wikidata courses from this summer. We have summarized some of the results of those first two courses [in this blog post](#). We are proud of all of the edits these participants made on Wikidata. These two courses created more than 200 new items, made more than 3,000 edits, and added more than 300 descriptions to items. Lastly we had one participant merge more than 400 items. This is an achievement we are extremely proud of.

On a qualitative level, we had a participant created a new property: [Archives Directory for the History of Collecting in America ID](#), which is now in use with almost 100 items. We had another start an engaging discussion about [how to express the concept of “exoneration”](#) on Wikidata. These kinds of conversations could have a lasting impact on their respective disciplines on Wikidata. This level of engagement on Wikidata is something we hope future courses can build off of and that the Wikidata community can benefit from.

## Wikipedia

This month we launched two new courses with two new partners! First, a 12-week course with the National Science Policy Network as part of its [2020 Election Initiative](#). Wiki Scientists are learning to contribute to Wikipedia in order to improve articles on scientific subjects relevant to the 2020 election. The neutral, well-sourced, fact-based material participants add will contribute to the body of knowledge voters check when making decisions at the ballot next year. You can read more about our partnership in [this blog post from last month](#). The scientists taking the course are just starting to make some edits and select articles to work on in the coming weeks. A few examples of the topics they plan to improve at [pathogen](#), [algal bloom](#), [user research](#), and [science policy of the United States](#), among many others. We are excited by the cause and passion of the course and looking forward to helping these subject-matter experts have an impact on public knowledge.

We also started an 8-week course in connection with the New York Academy of Sciences. Like the NSPN course, participants are still in the early stages of the course, making minor edits and selecting their main project articles. We are thrilled with the range of scientific expertise these Wiki Scientists bring with them, selecting the kinds of articles that are difficult to edit for people without subject-matter training like [sense strand](#), [nigrostriatal pathway](#), [graph C\\*-algebra](#), and [anterior cranial fossa](#). Stay tuned next month, when participants will be busy making substantial improvements.



*The [doula](#) article was significantly improved by a Society of Family Planning Wiki Scientist.*

Also this month we wrapped up our second course in partnership with the Society of Family Planning. Like the first course, which finished last month, participants brought with them a

wealth of expertise and experience on the subjects of abortion and contraception. In total, they added more than 23,000 words to 33 articles. Here are some stand-out examples

- **Doulas** play an important support role in many people's health-related experiences, and the Wikipedia article about them receives more than 1,000 views every day. It was substantially expanded and improved by a Wiki Scientist, who rewrote the article's lead and added multiple sections, such as on training and certification.
- **Menstrual suppression** is the use of hormonal management to stop or reduce menstrual bleeding. Surprisingly, Wikipedia did not even have an article about this topic before a Wiki Scientist created it.
- A Wiki Scientist doubled the size of the article on **vaginal bleeding**, expanding the lead as well as several sections, especially the sections about children and premenopausal women. 200 people consult this article every day.
- The article about **medical abortion** (or medication abortion) regards the use of pills to bring about an abortion. It is another high-impact article, with 450 people checking it each day. A Wiki Scientist made a wide range of improvements, for example reworking the lead, expanding content, adding references, and replacing references.
- Another Wiki Scientist improved the article on **reproductive rights**, with a focus on expanding the human rights section.

We had another article appear on Wikipedia's main page through Did You Know (DYK) on behalf of a summer NARA participant: **Maud E. Craig Sampson Williams** with the following hook: "Did you know that African-American suffragist Maud E. Craig Sampson Williams was denied membership in the National American Woman Suffrage Association?" It received more than 1,000 page views while on the main page!

## Visiting Scholars Program

This month Northeastern University Visiting Scholar Rosie Stephenson-Goodknight created an incredible *seven* new biographies of women and improved one that already existed:

- **Elizabeth Bowen Thompson** (1812 or 1813–1869), British educator and missionary who founded the British Syrian Schools.
- **Lydia Mary Fay** (1804–1878), American missionary, educator, writer, and translator who was among the early missionaries in China.
- **Melinda Rankin** (1811–1888), missionary, teacher, and writer from New England who worked primarily in Mexico, opening the first Protestant mission there in 1866.
- **Beulah Woolston** (1828–1886), an early American missionary in China who founded schools, translated textbooks, and edited a Chinese-language newspaper.
- **Harriet Merrick Warren** (1843–1893), an American editor who was president of the New England branch of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society.



- [E. Florence Barker](#) (1840–1897), leader and activist in the American women's club movement.
- [Amanda L. Aikens](#) (1833–1892), American editor and philanthropist who was instrumental in founding the Wisconsin Industrial School for Girls.
- [Mary Jane Aldrich](#) (1833–1909), temperance reformer, lecturer, and essayist who was vice-president of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union.



*Elizabeth Bowen Thompson*

Meanwhile, George Mason University Visiting Scholar Gary Greenbaum has been working hard with several other editors to improve the lengthy article on the [Apollo 13](#) space mission. To date, he has made more than 500 edits to the page. Most Wikipedians don't make 500 edits to any single page, but this is not terribly unusual for Gary. He also set to work on the [San Francisco–Oakland Bay Bridge half dollar](#). If history is any precedent, it will not be long before we report its promotion to one of the higher levels of quality on Wikipedia, joining his collection of other excellent numismatics entries.

## Advancement

### Partnerships

This month, we started our Wiki Scientists courses with the New York Academy of Sciences and the National Science Policy Network.

One of our partners, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), officially launched a collective campaign ([#DigCitCommit](#)) to raise awareness of digital citizenship

projects and the importance of engaging students to improve their digital literacy. Wiki Education is a [part of the coalition](#) aiming to reach 1 million students with new digital citizenship competencies, teaching students to be inclusive, informed, engaged, balanced, and alert. Wiki Education looks forward to working with new instructors who join the Student Program through this initiative, assigning students to write Wikipedia—a classroom project proven to achieve digital literacy skills.

## Fundraising

September was a productive month on the fundraising front. We received our first grant payment of \$550K for our current general operating support grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and our second grant payment of \$167K for our current grant from the Stanton Foundation. We also received the exciting news that the WITH Foundation will be awarding Wiki Education a \$40K grant to improve information on Wikipedia related to healthcare and disability issues. This great news was followed by the announcement that the Michelson 20MM Foundation will be awarding us \$25K Spark grant to support improvements to our Dashboard. Finally, we received a grant of \$1000 from the Leighty Foundation to support our Wiki Scholars and Scientists courses. All of this support from our wonderful foundation partners is helping us accomplish our goals of improving the quality, representativeness, and accuracy of Wikipedia.

In addition to receiving these new grants, we continued our efforts to acquire new grants, as well as renewal support from our existing funders. We submitted a letter of intent to the Park Foundation as well as a pre-proposal to the Institute of Museum and Library Services, in partnership with Wayne State University. We also had positive check-in conversations with our program officer at the Moore Foundation and with our program officer at the Wikimedia Foundation. As we cultivated and strengthened relationships with our funder partners, we also conducted a lot of desk research to identify potential new funders that we can reach out to and establish meaningful reciprocal relationships.

## Communications

Academia is changing its mind about the place Wikipedia has in the classroom. This month, we featured [new research published by Dr. Kate Grillo](#) about the value of a Wikipedia assignment in archaeology courses. The paper, which she published along with Daniel Contreras in Cambridge University Press earlier this year, ultimately concludes that “Wikipedia’s popularity and reach mean that archaeologists should actively engage with the website by adding and improving archaeological content.”

So many women in STEM don't have a Wikipedia biography until they've been recognized in a huge way. But thanks to Dr. Rebecca Barnes' student at Colorado College, paleoclimatologist Dr.

Andrea Dutton already had one even before she was named a MacArthur Foundation Fellow this month. Read our story [here](#).

Our Dashboard software won the "Coolest Tool" award at Wikimania this year. [Read](#) why our Chief Technology Officer Sage Ross was so touched by the recognition. Or [read](#) about our positive experience at Wikimania more generally.

If you asked people to name an American suffragist, you might hear a few names of famous white women repeated. Our National Archives Wiki Scholars are making sure Wikipedia gives equal weight to suffragists of color, too. Read more about their progress [here](#).

#### **Blog posts:**

- [Last week to sign up for September Wikidata courses!](#) (September 4)
- [New Dashboard feature simplifies student peer review](#) (September 5)
- [Building digital literacy capacity with UMass Lowell faculty](#) (September 9)
- [Monthly Report, July 2019](#) (September 11)
- [Public archaeology at its most effective](#) (September 13)
- [Making sure Wikipedia tells the stories of African-American suffragists](#) (September 16)
- [Dashboard wins Coolest Tool Award](#) (September 17)
- [Opening up the linked data world of Wikidata to new editors](#) (September 17)
- [A word from the wise: tips from experienced instructors](#) (September 19)
- [Law students add nuance to Wikipedia articles about famous cases](#) (September 23)
- [Calling all librarians, archivists, and museum specialists](#) (September 24)
- [If you're a biologist in search of science communication tools...](#) (September 25)
- [Saying Goodbye to Jim Council](#) (September 26)
- [Stronger together: Wikimania 2019](#) (September 27)
- [Are the MacArthur 'Genius' grant winners represented on Wikipedia?](#) (September 27)
- [Monthly Report, August 2019](#) (September 30)

#### **External media:**

- [An Audience of 500 Million: Editing Wikipedia as a Writing Assignment](#). Alexandra Edwards. *Tech Style*. (September 11, 2019)

## Technology

In September, Software Developer Wes Reid focused on implementing a new user experience for the core 'create/improve an article' workflow for students. This new interface, which we plan to deploy between terms before the Spring 2020 classes start, provides relevant information for each distinct stage of the assignment lifecycle.

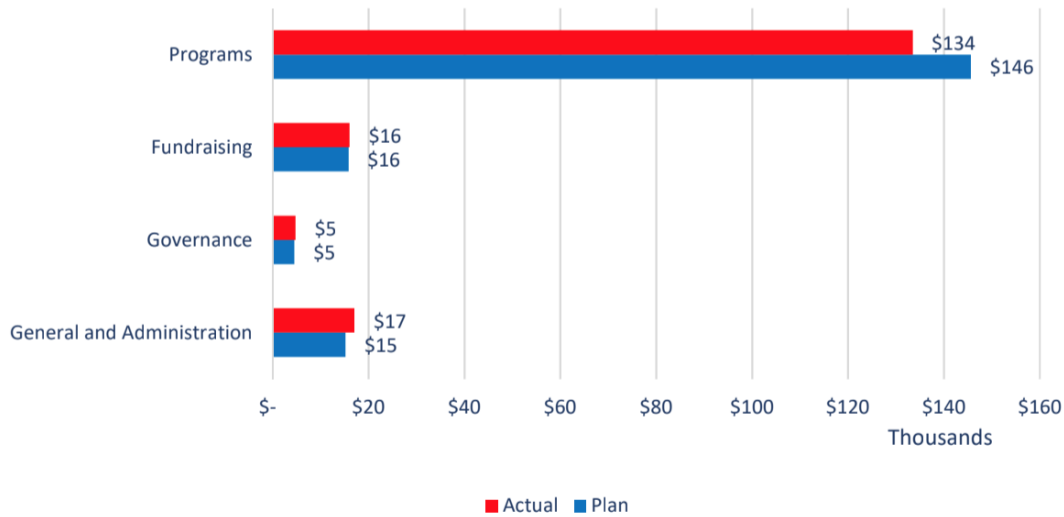
Along with the usual set of library upgrades, we significantly updated the Dashboard's background job system, which is responsible for calculating course statistics and making automated Wikipedia edits to reflect course actions. With this update, the background jobs are now part of the server's "system" services, which means they automatically get restarted when a server is rebooted. We also moved more of date importation into the core background job that handles data on a course-by-course basis, removing inconsistencies between different stats that were previously updated independently of each other.

We also made a number of improvements around how the Dashboard handles private information including better documentation of exactly what private information the Dashboard stores and why, steps for removing private information, and a way to download the private information stored about users.

## Finance & Administration

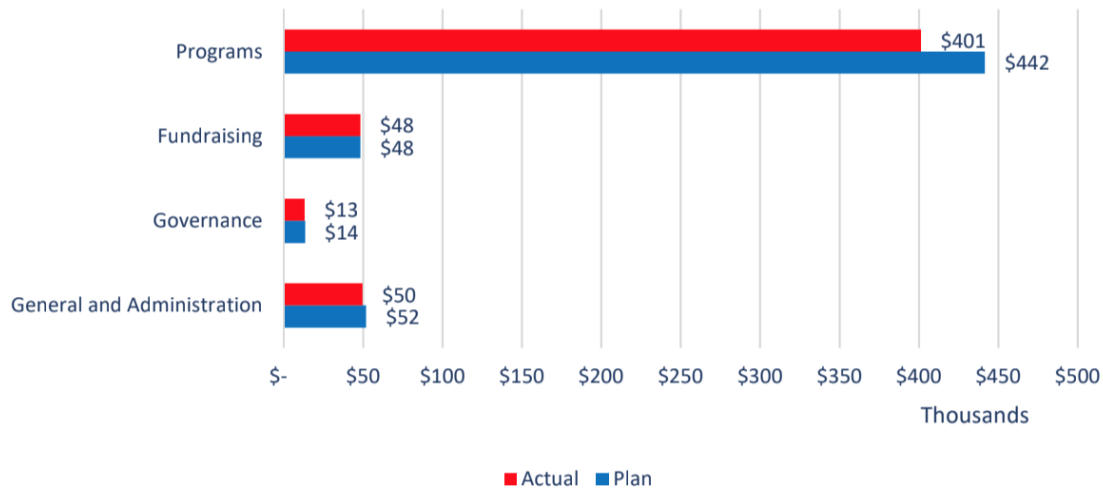
Overall expenses in September were \$171K, (\$10K) less than the budgeted plan of \$181K. Programs were under by (\$12K) due to a combination of benefits (\$1K), Indirect Expense allocation (\$5K), Communication (\$2K), and Travel (\$7K) while incurring an overage in Professional Fees +\$3K. General and Administration was over by +\$2K due to a combination of items including an increase in travel +\$1K, benefits accrual +\$1K, and Promotional expense +\$1, while under in Meetings (\$6K), along with an uptick in Shared expenses +\$5K. Fundraising and Governance were right on budget for the month.

## Expenses September 2019 Actual vs. Plan



The Year-to-date expenses are \$513K (\$43K) under budget of \$556K. Fundraising and Board are right on target. General and Administration is under by (\$2K) due to Operational Expenses (\$14K), Payroll (\$6K) and Occupancy (\$1K) with an uptick in shared expenses +\$19K. Programs are under by (\$41K) due to Travel (\$16K), Communications (\$6K) and Indirect Cost allocations (\$19K).

## Year to Date Expenses September 2019 Actual vs. Plan



## Office of the ED

Current priorities:

- Establishing tracking mechanisms for earned income-generating programs
- Preparing for the upcoming audit

In September, Frank provided the board with his reflections on the organization's performance during the past fiscal year. 2018–19 has been a year that brought many changes to Wiki Education: most notable, and as a result of an effort to increase our organization's financial sustainability, Wiki Education embarked on offering a new line of paid services. This step required an internal restructuring and the establishment of new processes which we're still fine-tuning in order to improve the smooth cooperation across different departments. First results of our "Selling Services" project are very positive: the interest in our Scholars & Scientists Wikipedia and Wikidata courses has continuously increased and feedback from course participants has been overwhelmingly great. As a result, our earned revenue last fiscal year has by far exceeded our expectations and put us on a course toward creating a meaningful second source of revenue for Wiki Education.

As part of our effort to streamline and improve processes, Frank created the first draft of a new contract signing policy. Given that we started working with a fast growing number of external partners who pay for our services, this new policy will provide more clarity for those among staff who have the authority to sign contracts. In order to gather feedback, Frank has shared the draft with members of the senior leadership team and is planning on enacting the policy in October.

Also in September, Frank participated in the board's development committee call, alongside TJ Bliss in his role as Chief Advancement Officer, updating the committee members about the current state of our fundraising efforts and the path forward.

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