

## President's Update - December 10, 2015

Allow me, please, to share the silly highlight of my week -- a tiny dog wearing a tiny cowboy hat sitting on a miniature horse outside our library.

Like many academic libraries, [Olson Library](#) collaborates with a local therapy pet organization for an evening of smiles and wags to help students cope with the stress of final exams. This semester we had a special visitor, Dixie the mini-horse, who was perfectly comfortable with her friend Clara sitting on her back. Needless to say, Dixie, Clara and all the other therapy dogs were quite popular on campus.



I firmly believe that silliness is an important part of campus and the workplace in general. Silliness -- in moderation, of course -- fosters creativity, inspires conversation and distracts from stress. I love watching our students take a break from intense studying to interact with the

therapy dogs and the therapy mini-horse. The students talk to the dogs, talk to each other and talk to the library staff. Everyone smiles.

Many of us no longer face final exams, but I suspect that all of us face challenging conversations and difficult situations in our jobs. I find that those challenges are more manageable if they are broken up with laughter.

Since I don't always have access to a tiny dog wearing a tiny hat sitting on mini-horse, I keep a few slingshot monkeys in my desk. These toys have elastic arms that allow them to propel through the air while making a crazy monkey noise. When a member of my staff has to face something exasperating (as we sometimes do), a toy monkey flying through the air may be the only possible response.

Several members of my staff proudly display in their offices a monkey that was earned by facing (and surviving) a difficult situation. It serves as a symbol of the absurdity that can happen in a dynamic environment such as a library. It also serves as a reminder that we were able to laugh together and keep going forward together.

Long live silliness!

[Back to news](#)