

**University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries**  
**Three-Year Plan**  
**Fiscal Years 2009 – 2011**

**University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries Mission Statement**

As a gateway to knowledge, the Libraries are key partners in teaching, learning, and research at UMass Amherst and in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Supporting freedom of inquiry, the Libraries foster a diverse and inclusive environment in which to engage with ideas and acquire the critical skills necessary for lifelong learning. By combining the latest information technology with excellent public service, the staff build and maintain a rich information environment, facilitate access to it, and create a hub of campus and community scholarly activity.

**Introduction**

The first Three-Year Plan for UMass Amherst Libraries spanned FY 2005-2007. In late calendar 2007, the Libraries completed a self-study that included an external review by a team of four distinguished library professionals. The self-study report and the external review report have guided the development of this second Three-Year Plan. Essentially, our mission continues unchanged. The continuing challenge is to use flexibility and creativity in developing the information resources, services, facilities and technologies required to meet the teaching, learning, and research needs of UMass Amherst community.

These needs are as diverse as the Schools and Colleges themselves and vary with the depth of study and specificity of research in any given discipline. When the identified needs are matched against the available funding, it is evident that the Libraries cannot be all things to all people. The Libraries must prioritize the requirements of students and faculty and employ a combination of traditional and twenty-first century library practices to fulfill them. An active and ongoing program of assessment will inform what we do. We will solidify our relationship with the UMass Amherst community through initiatives and collaborations in four strategic areas: information resources, a user-focused environment, facilities and infrastructure, and organizational development.

**I. Information Resources**

**A. Support Scholarship Through Collections and Information Access**

The Libraries will continue to pursue a strategy of actively acquiring scholarly information in all formats in support of campus curricular and research needs. We will assess the degree to which the overall collection meets the needs of the academic disciplines, striking a balance between resources that must be available locally and those we can deliver through document delivery, interlibrary loan, and other sharing strategies. We will explore a strategy with the campus administration that provides start-up funds designated for the purchase of library materials for new teaching and research faculty. We will also pursue opportunities that include the Libraries in the planning process for new academic programs.

To successfully meet campus information needs, UMass Amherst must stabilize the funding of the base collections budget and provide a mechanism for supplementing it each year to support cost increases. The Libraries have been good stewards in effectively managing and leveraging the materials budget to best meet campus information needs. Inordinate inflation and the increase in the number of publications released annually necessitate a campuswide strategy to address collection costs with stable funding rather than one-time supplements. Absent annual base increases, it will be difficult for the Libraries to maintain, let alone expand, collections in all fields in which UMass Amherst is committed to excellence. We will continue to investigate additional funding sources through library grants and development efforts.

### **B. Facilitate Change in Scholarly Communication**

Scholars have new methods for gathering data, creating knowledge, and collaborating across geographic and temporal boundaries. These factors are changing the very nature of scholarly research and communication as well as users' expectations of information access and delivery systems. The challenges of vast amounts of data and complex processes across many scales are faced by many, if not all, scholarly disciplines. We will collaborate with other campus entities to create a comprehensive cyber infrastructure and the systems, tools, and services emerging from these new technologies to enable individuals, groups, and organizations to advance research and education in ways that revolutionize who can participate, what they can do, and how they do it. We will lead efforts to support open access and fair-use principles and find solutions to sharing research and scholarship legally, equitably, and cost effectively. We will encourage deposit of all campus research products in the digital depository to ensure access to the material for current and future generations of scholars.

### **C. Preserve and Provide Access to the Scholarly Record**

Academic libraries have always played a prominent role in maintaining access to and preservation of published and unpublished scholarship. The Libraries recognize our responsibility for building and preserving both print and digital collections. We will develop policies, processes and systems to capture, manage, preserve, and make accessible knowledge assets now and into the future. We will identify collections to digitize that are unique to UMass Amherst and that have regional, state, national and international interest. We will continue to develop expertise in the creation and management of digital collections and information. We will explore collaborative opportunities to collect and preserve digitized knowledge resources.

## **II. User-Centered Environment**

### **A. Embrace a Partner Service Philosophy**

Increased engagement of library professional and classified staff with our users wherever they are is essential to realizing our potential as full partners with faculty and students in teaching, learning, and research. The Libraries' liaison program is the primary connection between the Libraries and the faculty, the academic departments,

and ultimately the students, but all library staff regardless of their particular responsibilities within the library system are focused on connecting our users with the information they desire. Since scholarly and quality information is increasingly available online from anywhere at any time and at the convenience of library users, the libraries strive to transcend place in providing access to services and collections.

### **B. Guide Development of a Campuswide Information Literacy Program**

In collaboration with the Provost's Office, academic departments, and various campus committees/task forces, we will develop a comprehensive, campuswide information literacy program to enable students and faculty to find, evaluate, manage, and apply information for academic and life purposes. The focus of the program is to integrate information literacy skill development activities and library resources into the curriculum. Ongoing evaluation that measures student learning, retention, and success will be a key aspect of our successful information literacy program.

### **C. Adapt Service Models to Meet Changing User Needs**

Evolving information technologies require the Libraries to develop new service options to maintain a user-centered environment of the highest caliber. Outstanding public service will remain the foundation for all our future services. One of our challenges is to streamline discovery of and access to high-quality information. To meet this goal, the Libraries will remain committed to ongoing assessment and enhancement of the Libraries' online presence.

## **III. Facilities and Infrastructure**

### **A. Maximize Use of Current Facilities and Infrastructure**

The Libraries will work to provide facilities that are inviting, safe, well maintained, and accessible, and that are available for the greatest number of hours possible. Additional storage for print materials will enable new uses for our valuable space. Providing adequate resources, both funding and staffing, for the technology infrastructure is essential to the success of both library staff and our users.

### **B. Transform Existing Spaces for Changing Needs**

Changing service and collection needs provide the opportunity to transform existing library spaces. Building on the success of the Learning Commons, the Libraries will create additional spaces that are equally centered on user success. Music and media, multimedia, government publications, and the Integrated Sciences and Engineering Library are primary candidates for change in creating this twenty-first-century environment for students and faculty. Quiet study space and areas for work and study that enhance research are also important.

### **C. Work with Campus Partners to Define Additional Collaborative Environments**

The Libraries will work cooperatively with other campus partners to develop additional collaborative, user-centered environments. As a means of strengthening the teaching opportunities within the campus community, the Teaching Commons is envisioned as a place where faculty can meet in a collegial and supportive environment to learn about information resources and instructional technologies. Additional discussions will take place to define a Research Commons for the graduate and research mission. This innovative facility will integrate information resources and technologies with research support services.

#### **IV. Organizational Development**

##### **A. Assess Training and Development Needs**

The Libraries will use several approaches to determine the training and development needs of staff. In addition to conducting traditional needs assessment, we will identify and address barriers that prevent staff from learning new skills. We will conduct frequent needs assessments and measure the success of our training initiatives.

##### **B. Develop and Coordinate Training Programs**

The Libraries will address the practical needs of staff and provide learning opportunities that will more effectively advance the overall mission of the Libraries and the campus. In addition to developing an in-house curriculum of essential skills, we will incorporate the services of outside vendors and coordinate with campus and other groups, such as Boston Library Consortium, Association of College and Research Libraries New England, NELINET and NERCOMP, to assist us in offering a robust assortment of development opportunities.

##### **B. Focus on Organizational Climate and Diversity Assessment**

Issues of diversity, fairness, and excellent customer service can be viewed as integral and interrelated elements in our organization. The Libraries strive to maintain a supportive and productive work environment in which policies, practices and procedures are administered fairly, employees feel empowered and diversity is valued and respected. Participation in the ClimateQUAL™ Organizational Culture and Diversity Assessment survey will help assess the current organizational culture and serve as the basis for a conversation among all library committees and staff about ways our workplace environment and staff diversity can be improved.

#### **Conclusion**

According to the External Review Team Report, the UMass Amherst Libraries have many strengths including:

- A clear focus on the needs of the students and faculty and a willingness to collaborate across campus to advance the mission of the university;

- Dedicated librarians and staff who have a significant commitment to the campus and the Libraries;
- An organization that is agile, responsive, creative, collaborative and “can do;”
- A good foundation of assessment and analysis that informs important decisions about new initiatives and needed changes to existing programs.

This Three-Year Plan builds on the successes and lessons learned from the past three years. It lays out an ambitious agenda, but one that is essential as the UMass Amherst Libraries support the aspirations of the campus. Resources are vital –for stable and growing collections, for additional staffing and programs, for staff development, and for improved facilities. Telling our story through campus participation, development activities, and professional engagement will promote our accomplishments, build our reputation and, in turn, attract resources.

The UMass Amherst Libraries, as intellectual nexus of the campus, will continue to lead in the rapidly changing environment of libraries, publishing and technology. With our vibrant organizational culture, dedicated staff, and creative use of resources, the Libraries will continue to meet our challenges and promote our opportunities. Our success is essential for the success of the students and faculty.