2017-2018
ANNUAL REPORT
OF
RESEARCH LIBRARY COUNCIL

Presented at the
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Introduction

The Research Library Council met three times during AY 2017-2018: October 13, 2017; December 1, 2017; and April 6, 2018. The discussions from the year’s meetings are summarized in the items below.

Collections

- As a result of the Elsevier license renegotiations, the UMass campuses will have one title list instead of three different lists.
- Paulina Borrego, Science and Engineering Librarian, gave an update on the Libraries’ cancellation of the Royal Society of Chemistry journal bundle subscription, due to a planned 24% price increase over 3 years. The decision was made to subscribe to the most-used titles and use Interlibrary Loan for the rest. In addition, the Libraries purchased the back file of the Royal Society of Chemistry titles, which includes selected pieces of their previously published materials. The package would have cost $79,727.72. What we paid was $33,996 for subscriptions and $5,128.50 for ILL and copyright fees.

Facilities

- The Du Bois lobby underwent a modest renovation, with the addition of new seating and two large video installations to showcase spaces, collections, and services available in the Libraries.
- A two-phased refresh of the Learning Commons, an area heavily used by students, will bring services into one central location and imbed more technology in the space.
- The Graduate Commons opened on the 5th floor of the Du Bois Library on November 30 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in the morning and an open house for graduate students in the afternoon. This project was a partnership of the Graduate School, the Provost’s Office, and the Library, and the renovation was based on graduate students’ feedback and design ideas.

Finance and Staffing

- Two associate dean positions were created:
  - Sally Krash, Head of Information Resources Management, was appointed as Interim Associate Dean for Content and Discovery.
  - Steve Bischof, Five College Aleph Coordinator, was appointed as Interim Associate Dean for Library Technology.
- The Libraries were asked to include a $185,000 (1%) budget reduction in their FY19 budget proposal. This reduction will be divided between staffing (by not filling a couple of retirement vacancies) and collections, as in previous years.

Programs

- Multiple events were held in celebration of W.E.B. Du Bois’s 150th Birthday. The 24th Annual Du Bois Lecture took place on February 21 in the Old Chapel and on February 23 at the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center in Great Barrington, with speaker Dr. Reiland Rabaka of the University of Colorado Boulder. On February 28, a W.E.B. Du Bois event was held at the State House in Boston with David Levering Lewis as the speaker.
- The Libraries’ first Edible Book Festival was held on April 5 in the Du Bois Library. Winners were announced in the categories of “Most Creative,” “Best Pun,” and “Best in Show.”
Projects

- Student success is being studied through an assessment project that tracks the class of 2021, looking at services provided to students and how we measure those outcomes.
- Kathleen Berry, Discovery & Resource Management Systems Coordinator, presented on the Library’s discovery search usability testing, the first serious usability testing of an online system done by the Library. The discovery service is a way to search various data sources and the purpose of the testing was to make the search as intuitive as possible. Over 70 UMass students and faculty were recruited for testing.
- The Library is partnering with the College of Information and Computer Sciences as they build out their information program. The Library will function as a type of lab for the program.
- Planning for the Libraries’ next three-year strategic plan began with an “appreciative inquiry” by each department in the fall.
- Charlie Schweik gave an overview of the World Librarians project, which he is collaborating on with Jeremy Smith from Scholarly Communication. This is an open education resource project that works with schools, library branches, and health care centers in Malawi to provide open access information to students.
- Jennifer Friedman, Head of Research Services, presented on altmetrics (“alternative metrics”), which explore readership, diffusion and reuse indicators that can be tracked via blogs, social media, peer production systems, and collaborative annotation tools, including social bookmarking and reference management services.

Services

- When the Image Collection Library moved from Bartlett to the Du Bois Library, it was renamed the Digital Scholarship Center. The move was an opportunity to rebrand and broaden their focus, with the intention that they could act as a “front door” for the Libraries’ digital scholarship efforts and support.
- Brian Ogilvie facilitated a focus group at the December Research Library Council meeting about support for research and digital scholarship. The questions posed were:
  - How has the research process changed for you (since you first became a faculty member)?
  - What are your hopes for university support with research?
- The Libraries’ loan period of books for faculty was discussed. Currently the initial loan period is 180 days with three renewals, which is within best practices among our peers. This summer the “renew all” function of the library catalog will be changed so each item can be renewed for the maximum amount of days possible.
- The goal is for the My Library Account portal to be fully operable in the fall.