

Re-Imagining UMass Amherst Libraries

Three Year Plan

Fiscal Years 2005 – 2007

The UMass Amherst Libraries exist to provide the information resources required for teaching and research on campus. These information resource 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 information resources are matched against the funding available for purchasing resources, it is evident that the Libraries cannot be all things to all peoples.

In addition, the current academic environment presents a set of expectations within which the Libraries must operate – and succeed:

- Provide 24/7 access to resources, services and facilities
- Support a variety of modalities – physical, virtual, and disabled accessibility
- Maximize the effectiveness of current resources
- Connect users, information resources, and services in a seamless, customizable manner
- Consolidate service points to make the most efficient use of staff

The Libraries must prioritize the requirements of students and faculty and employ a combination of traditional and 21st century library practices to fulfill them. We will solidify our relationship with the university community through multiple initiatives in three strategic areas: information resources; a user-focused service environment; and, the library as place.

1) Information Resources

a) Implementation Strategy: Provide the “right stuff”

The Libraries will continue to address the demand for electronic resources while recognizing print collections are still essential for many areas of scholarly activity. Where analysis determines ownership to be the most desirable and cost effective method, we will build collections. Alternatively, we will provide access to lesser used or extremely expensive resources through document delivery and interlibrary loan services. Determining the appropriate collection strategies will require close work between the academic departments and the library liaisons. An additional concern for both print and electronic collections is the need to provide custodial care that will preserve access for future generations.

b) Implementation Strategy: Preserve and provide access to “unique stuff”

The Libraries will explore and implement technologies, services, and products that provide access to unique library collections and to the intellectual output of the campus. Initiatives to digitize special collections and to create an institutional repository of electronic content will

be a high priority. We will also promote awareness of and conversations about the issues of scholarly communication and open access to information.

2) User-Focused Service Environment

a) Implementation Strategy: Leverage technology to enhance information services

The Libraries will combine our current excellent services to all users with the appropriate technologies that promote, expand, and enhance those services. We will support research and scholarship by implementing a new online library system, providing value-added products such as citation management software, and fully realizing a 24/7 environment using the Web.

b) Implementation Strategy: Cultivate partnerships to create innovative, collaborative services

The Libraries will connect users and information resources in a seamless, customizable manner by, for example, integrating library services such as electronic reserves and information literacy modules into the campus learning management system. We will explore all possible avenues of collaboration to consolidate service points and create innovative and beneficial services for users.

3) Library as Place

a) Implementation Strategy: Use of current facilities

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.

b) Implementation Strategy: Develop a Learning Commons

The Libraries will work cooperatively with other campus agencies to develop a collaborative, student-focused Learning Commons. This facility will be a unique hub that integrates information resources and technology in order to strengthen the teaching and research opportunities within the university community. The Learning Commons will be a focal point on campus where the elements of meeting, collaboration, and discovery come together. It will be a supportive environment where students and faculty can take advantage of library resources and the expertise of reference librarians in concert with state-of-the-art technology and learning support services. As envisioned, the Learning Commons will have at least 500 seats in a combination of flexible open spaces, breakout rooms, projection/practice spaces, and several, more traditional, computer classrooms.

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