A Multitude of Thanks

As we reflect on another year of progress at the Libraries, we thank our donors. Your generosity allows the Libraries to be proactive in meeting the demands of students and faculty. While the annual budget provides an adequate library for campus, it is philanthropy that makes us excellent, and elevates the entire university. This year, UMass Amherst climbed in the U.S. News & World Report rankings to its highest level yet, number 26, and in the top 10 of schools and colleges nationwide for campus sustainability by Sierra magazine and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. Our successes are possible because of your support. Thank you.

Dean Simon Neame

$1,231,934 RAISED—THANKS TO YOU

HOW YOU GAVE

64% Gifts-in-Kind
18% Special Collections
15% Supporting students through learning spaces and resources
1% Endowments
2% Other

Buttons are popular with students; Marketing and Outreach Assistant Lauren Weiss and illustrator Chloe Deeley ’18 teamed up to make custom buttons for the Libraries’ holiday and video promotions.

From top left to right: 2017-18 school year; Procrastination Station; Circulation and Reserves; Research Services; Learning Commons; Digital Media Lab; Mole Day; Fall; T-Shirt Day; Music and Media Collection; Instructional Media Lab; Snowman marks end of fall semester; 150th anniversary of the birth of W. E. B. Du Bois; finding a Book in the Libraries; Ape-Ril Fools Day; 2018 falcon season; Science and Engineering Library and Star Wars Day; Pride Month; Jurassic Park’s 25th anniversary; Shark Week’s 30th anniversary; 2018-19 school year; Back to Hogwarts Day; Talk Like a Pirate Day; Halloween.
By the Numbers

1,093,575 visitors
1,965,655 website page views
2,462,395 electronic resource downloads (full-text)
99,104 Digital Reserve clicks
2,265,719 downloads
233 countries

Hey - props to the @5Colleges and @UMass Libraries system. I’m finding exactly what I need to continue my research this morning.

8:15 AM - 13 Aug 2017 from Amherst, MA

Just Saying NO:
The Anatomy of a Cancellation

Across the globe, libraries are fighting back against skyrocketing journal costs with the almighty dollar: in the face of mounting prices, more and more libraries are refusing to renew so-called “big deal” journal packages with industry heavyweights like Springer Nature, Wiley, and Cambridge University Press, to name a few. There’s even a website to keep track of the growing number of big deal cancellations.

Florida State University’s cancellation of its Elsevier contract was one of the latest and largest. FSU sought to renegotiate its 20-year contract with Elsevier, which cost FSU about $2 million year—plus four percent annual inflation. FSU believed the fee was unfair, and their faculty voted unanimously to endorse the library’s plan to cancel.

In 2016, the Libraries spent more than $73,000 a year for RSC. While negotiating a new three-year license, the Libraries were offered a contract that included an eight percent increase consecutively for each year, pushing the 2019 subscription cost to more than $93,000. A cost increase of 24 percent over a three-year period was unsustainable; the Libraries needed to take a stand.

The UMass Amherst Libraries’ first priority is ensuring access and cost savings. Although document delivery is not free due to varying copyright costs associated per article, it seems to be working, for now. This may change as the gap grows between one-time back-file access and the current materials to which the Libraries no longer subscribe. The Libraries keep in touch with faculty regarding the change in access and its effect on the way they conduct research. Some faculty have found different avenues of obtaining material, and sometimes, dissuaded from certain articles due to document delivery costs, they have sought out comparable materials. The Libraries will continue to monitor and assess, making changes needed to maintain a balance between information access and fiscal responsibility.

—Librarians Paulina Borrego & Kate Zdepski

To help guide the decision, the Libraries gathered data on recent use of the 38 titles in the RSC package. Faculty in the departments of chemistry, chemical engineering, polymer science, and other related departments were surveyed for their must-have titles. Approximately 12 journals would meet most of the demand. Individual subscriptions to those journals, along with document delivery through interlibrary loan and per-article purchase, filled in the gaps. Additionally, the post-cancellation savings of $41,000 went toward a one-time purchase of the RSC back file for $55,000, providing access to older material.

The result? So far, so good: One year out, the à la carte approach to making these resources available is providing access to older material.

Borrego and Zdepski gave a presentation on the RSC journal cancellation at the American Chemical Society conference in August 2018.