

# **Annual Report**

## **Alumnae Library**

### **FY 23-24**

#### **Overview**

In FY 23-24, Alumnae Library took the lead in making itself into an environment that could offer safe spaces to learn and study. Library staff found diverse ways to engage students from various backgrounds and possessing the full spectrum of interest levels. Staff engaged rigorously in teaching students (and faculty) how to access resources for themselves, while working both in person and remotely. Staff took seriously its overall goal to help remote students become not point-and-click robots, but evaluators of information, to become engaged enough in their research to become independent in their learning.

As in previous years, library staff worked with faculty to test new databases to find those that serve our mission, programs, and our new centers. One new database, Brain Pop, was added to our collection at the request of faculty, but unused ones were jettisoned through a review process that involves statistical analysis and “ear-to-the-ground” knowledge of faculty needs. One member of staff continued to maintain a repository for digital files of the library’s print collection of Masters’ Theses and Doctoral Dissertations, as that digitization process continued. This repository is available at this [link](#) and this [link](#). In the last two years, staff have digitized 14,489 pages of the library's collection of Masters’ Theses and Doctoral Dissertations. Staff also connected Interlibrary Loan modules with Circulation and organized/hosted two highly successful lectures.

In keeping our consortia agreements (which allow us to work with other libraries for purchasing and planning benefits), the library continued to work with the Eastern Academic Scholars Trust (EAST, Inc.). This allowed it to responsibly delete print materials from its shelves, as EAST coordinates retention agreements of materials for its member libraries; each member library agrees to keep and steward certain titles, so that other EAST members can know print materials will always be available. In essence, EAST gives our library guaranteed access to over ten million print books at more than 150 libraries along the East Coast and guarantees the preservation of the scholarly record through retention commitments.

EAST members were also introduced to new technology (the Gold Rush collection analysis tool), which allowed us to purchase intelligently, avoiding purchasing the same print items as other libraries in the region (this also creates

better overall shared holdings). Via EAST, Alumnae Library also joined The Partnership for Shared Print Collections, a national shared print cooperative. One library staff member served on the Task Force that ushered in the merger of the two largest library consortia in the United States, The Partnership for Shared Print Collections (which handles monographs) and the Rosemont Shared Print Alliance (which handles serials) and was tasked as being one of the official voices of the merger and the final report's (with recommendations) author/editor.

## **Daily Responsibilities**

As for day-to-day responsibilities, library staff efficiently managed the Circulation Service Desk by hiring, training, and scheduling student worker staff. Library staff worked remotely one day per week and onsite four days per week. All library staff participated in gathering information for the library's annual IPEDS report. Library staff continued to serve as liaisons to all divisions and schools, as well as to associated groups such as The Irish Cultural Center, The Polish Cultural Center, The Sisters of St. Joseph, Student Services, and the SGA.

Our Technical Services Department added various print and digital materials that enhanced the library's collection. Library staff also maintained the Alumnae website and its Worldshare Management Services Knowledge Base (which allows students to search our entire collection—books, multimedia materials, and articles—through one interface).

Library staff managed an approximately \$350K materials budget. They made necessary changes this past fiscal year, working with the Business Office to change the way the library purchased books so that it could more efficiently spend its budget. Library staff worked with faculty for purchases of physical items (books, DVDs).

Library staff also continued to be engaged in Research Assistance via interactions with students virtually (Zoom, email, question forms on our web page, text messaging, and phone calls). Reference assistance, including scheduled research sessions, was offered both during regular library hours and after hours (remotely), weekends included. Staff monitored all virtual requests from 8:00 am until 10:00 pm. The library continued to be responsive to student needs, managing extended hours during finals and, using its Student Activities Fund Line, which allowed it to continue to offer Stress Buster Activities, coffee, tea, pastries, and pizza during finals.

Library staff in Archives continued to both inventory and digitize auditory materials, creating a repository on the Internet Archive. Digitizing Archives is a long-term project that is likely to take anywhere from 8 to 10 years. The College Archives continued to make its physical materials accessible

by appointment.

## **Currency (Training and Professional Development)**

Staff kept up to date by participating in Worldshare Management System web-based workshops, which allow staff to stay current with the software that runs our catalog and most of our databases. Library staff also attended The Eastern Academic Scholars Trust (EAST) Conference, held annually to keep all participants updated on the cutting-edge theories and practices behind shared print repositories—a necessity given the need to repurpose library space to support modern student learning needs. Subjects touched on included digitization and the nationwide collaboration of shared print collections. Staff also attended the Federal Depository Library Program Conference, which kept Alumnae Library updated on the program and the AI4Libraries Conference, which was held to discuss how libraries can use Artificial Intelligence in daily workflows.

Two library staff members published a book chapter on Sr. Mary and Sr. Eleanor Dooley using materials in both the Elms College Archives and the *Springfield Republican* Newspaper Archives.

## **Collegiality and Service to the College**

Some members of library staff continued to work with teaching faculty across campus through committee memberships and liaison positions. Library staff served on the following college committees: Technology, Faculty and Academic Standards, Courses and Curricula, Assessment, and Tenure and Promotion (one library staff member serving as Chair). Library staff also served as members of the Academic Success Team, the Advising Committee, the Institutional Review Board, and the Institutional Diversity Committee, as well as serving as Faculty Recorder and the official editor of *The Faculty Handbook*. The two librarians who served on Tenure and Promotion took active leadership roles in organizing an overhaul of the college's Tenure and Promotion sections of *The Faculty Handbook*. They also made up two-thirds of the subcommittee to create websites for the Third Year Review and Tenure and Promotion.

## **Currency and Service to the Profession**

Library staff kept current with trends in academic librarianship and education, something that is absolutely necessary for any academic librarian. Part of being an effective and efficient academic library is having staff who know when procedures and policies are outdated or simply no longer feasible.

This is difficult at best if one does not network with colleagues at other institutions to find out how issues and procedures are currently handled, as learning from others makes a lot more sense than trial and error. During FY 2023-24, library staff attended many virtual conferences and webinars, on subjects both in the field and on broader subjects. Staff attended webinars and virtual conferences on Title IX Training, Early Career Faculty Success, Libraries and Covid, Analyzing Collections using the Gold Rush Tool, Next Steps in Shared Collection Management, the Print Archive Network, Teaching and Inspiration, Controlled Digital Lending (Legal Issues), Copyright Issues, Resource Sharing, and Federal Document Issues.

Library staff continue to serve as members of The Eastern Academic Scholars Trust (EAST, Inc.) Board (as Co-Chair and Clerk), The Partnership for Shared Book Collections' Best Practices Working Group (as Chair), and The Partnership's Operations Committee. Library staff hold memberships in the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA), the American Library Association, NASIG, Inc. (formerly known as The North American Serials Interest Group), and the New England Library Association.

## **Goals for the Coming Year, FY 24-25**

### **Projects**

Library staff will continue to contribute directly to the teaching mission of the college by maintaining a classroom presence when invited and will continue to propose new IDS and CE courses. In addition, we have reached out to the Director of Student Engagement and Leadership to begin the process of allowing Recognized Student Organizations to use our display cases.

In the library proper, Circulation staff are engaged in a Shelf Sweep, which will include triage on damaged books and books that are not in the system, and the preservation of damaged books. Other staff will be cataloging digital theses and dissertations, as well as rare books, making the new digital theses/dissertation files available to the campus community, and working with the faculty/departments/divisions to set up a process of acquiring copies of new student work. In addition, staff will formalize a preservation program for our rare books.

Library staff also intend to update the ongoing Book Memorial Project. This will make all Book memorials easily findable in our catalog by donor or memorialized person. Staff will also start the process of cataloging digital copies of our post-1960 issues of *The Elmata* (our yearbook). Pre-1960 copies

and some of our rare books are already digitized at The Internet Archives at this [link](#), as are some of our lecture series speeches, at this [link](#). Staff also will begin the process to complete a full inventory over the next two years.

Staff is also involved in repurposing the old College Archives room to become the new Rare Books room and are consider a new title for the room so it doesn't get confused with the second floor SASS testing room. In addition, discussion is underway for possible events during Library Week in April 2025, including recruiting a speaker for the second installment of the new Anna Maria Walsh Lecture Series.

The reference team will be updating our current research guides, adding new research guides as needed, and Archives will also continue in the digitization and cataloging of its historical collections, especially of its textual and audio files (various lecture series), a process which we have already begun after identifying the necessary technology.

## **Daily Responsibilities**

To better our ability to meet our daily responsibilities, library staff will continue to present a rationale for any need to adjust our hours. Staff will continue to proactively meet faculty and student needs, addressing all their concerns as they are brought to our attention. When necessary, we will seek help from Administration, the Center for Student Success, and other entities to find ways to accommodate those student needs. We will continue to reschedule our student workers and library staff for extra hours of operation as they arise.

Staff will also continue to learn original cataloging, continue supporting all departments and schools through a robust liaison program, and continue with cataloging rare books. Finally, reference staff will continue to engage students both on a practical level (i.e., trade skills) and theoretical level (e.g., the ethics, philosophy, and psychology of their disciplines) in one-on-one sessions.

Library staff will also continue to work with the DNP (Doctor of Nursing Practitioner) program on integrating a resource check within its capstone process.

## **Currency (Training and Professional Development)**

Both faculty and staff status librarians plan to get as much workshop training as possible. Our sense of collegiality allows for this, as staff members are always willing to cover their colleagues when these colleagues need to be in training or at conferences or in workshops. Staff will continue to identify free and low-cost professional development opportunities, since we no longer have ready funds for such. They will attend workshops that help to insure their

proficiency with our current OCLC Worldshare Management System software (our Integrated Library System, or ILS). They will also attend OCLC Online User Conferences, as well as the consortia's relevant webinars and scheduled phone calls (its "Office Hours"). Faculty status librarians will continue to grow professionally and work towards creating scholarly communications by publishing, and they will explore the possibility of serving on more statewide, regional, and national committees.

### **Collegiality and Service to the College**

As noted, in FY 23-24, library staff continued to serve as Faculty Recorder, as well as members of the following committees: Assessment, Curriculum, Faculty Governance, Academic Advising, Institutional Diversity, and Technology. Two members of the library staff served on the Tenure and Promotion Committee. We will continue to make the library more responsive and helpful to faculty and students by continuing to serve on more committees (e.g., Faculty Governance) and continuing to grow the Liaison programs for specific disciplines and entities, both on campus and with associated entities.

### **Service to the Profession**

Library staff will continue to increase the library's profile statewide by maintaining memberships with The Digital Commonwealth, Boston Public Library, The Cooperative Libraries of Greater Springfield (CLGS), The Eastern Academic Scholars' Trust (EAST, Inc.), and The Partnership for Shared Collections (as a Board member and Co-Chair for the former and as an Operations Committee Member for the latter). In addition, library staff will continue to display photography shows and continue to give presentations at conferences (as the library's finances permit) and workshops/webinars.