

## New "King" Entrance to Welcome Blake Library Patrons

Construction on a new, functional and visually stunning entrance to the Blake Library is nearing completion, and university and community library patrons alike will have Maine's most prolific writer to thank for the marked improvement.

The entryway, which will greet users of the campus library before month's end was made possible through a \$40,000 gift from the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation received by the university late last spring.

In addition to being a lobby for the library, the entrance will also serve the new Acadian Archives building, which is currently under construction and will be connected to the Blake Library when completed later this year.



A photo of the nearly completed new entrance to the Blake Library.

"First impressions really are important. This wonderful gift from the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation will create an entrance to these facilities that is truly welcoming and more in keeping with the intellectual treasures in-

side," said President Richard Cost.

The new entrance was part of the original plan for the Archives building, and provided for an elegant entryway to the library that would be located on the east side of the building facing into the campus quad, in a wing of the library building added in 1988. The old main entrance remained where it did when the building was first constructed as a gymnasium in 1928, on the north side, facing the parking lot.

In addition to a new location the main entrance will be handicapped accessible. The door will have an airlock to keep out the cold.

Incorporated into the new plan has been the moving of the library circulation and reference desks to a location near the entrance. Very close to that area will be the Archives entrance when that facility is complete.

Blake Library staff will also relocate their facility's Acadian collection very near the entrance so if the Archives is closed, patrons will have resources to start their research.

"Staff at the library have dreamed for years of having the entrance face the campus quad instead of the parking lot. The shared space will provide better accessibility for library patrons as well as archives patrons," said Sharon Johnson, UMFK's dean of information services.

Johnson and her staff were concerned that construction of a new entrance might be altered or altogether jeopardized last year when bids for Archives

building construction came in higher than architects had estimated.

"The Kings have a reputation of being truly supportive of libraries," said Johnson.

Work on re-orienting the library for the new entrance and new Archives facility began early last year. The overall project has greatly impacted the library, creating the need to completely rearrange the facility.

Prior to actually moving books and shelves, staff had spent months planning for change and making sure the collection would fit.

The Blake Library plays a variety of important roles in helping to foster scholarship, literacy, and the arts in northern Maine. Its curriculum center is used extensively by local K-12 teachers, and the building contains the only art gallery exhibit space open year-round in the St. John Valley. In addition, the facility is heavily used by numerous Valley residents, including families who utilize the library's extensive collection of French children's literature.

## NEASC Re-accreditation Planning Begins for 2005

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Bridgewater State College in Bridgewater Massachusetts.

At Bridgewater, she rose through the ranks from director of institutional research and assessment to assistant vice president for academic affairs, and finally to associate vice president for planning and assessment, a position she held for three years.

O'Brien received both her master and doctorate degrees in education from Harvard University, and a bachelor of arts from Wellesley College in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

She has served on numerous committees and is the author of several publications. In addition, O'Brien has pre-

sented at more than 25 national and regional meetings.

UMFK officials are using the visit by Hegge and O'Brien to help UMFK faculty and staff learn about the resources that are available to them as they contribute to the institutional assessment and planning process.

They are looking to Hegge specifically to review and evaluate the current institutional assessment inventory and to assist with the refinement and implementation of the plan for institutional assessment and planning, as well as to generally prepare the campus for the NEASC accreditation team visit in 2005.