

General Report

Book One



University of Maine at Fort Kent

Annual Report – FY 2020

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Blake Library staff provide information services at the University of Maine at Fort Kent for the campus community, students and faculty at a distance, and the St. John Valley community. They administer traditional and electronic resources and services that are available to patrons on and off campus.

Library staff also support Academic Computing, the Acadian Archives, Audio-Visual Services, and Distance Education. Additionally, Blake Library is part of a University of Maine System consortium that allows staff to share resources and services, which in turn augments what is available to all UMFK and Fort Kent patrons.

Due to the events this fiscal year, the Achievements and Events portion will start with External rather than Departmental.

1. ACHIEVEMENTS AND EVENTS

a. External

- i. This year is the year of the COVID 2019 pandemic. The first reported cases came from China in December, 2019. And although communities tried to contain it, the virus expanded to the United States not long after. Due to the Governor and the System trying to mitigate wide-spread contagion in Maine, directives were put forth and campuses were closed by mid-March, 2020.

b. UMS

- i. The University of Maine System became the One University June, 2020.
- ii. The COVID 2019 pandemic caused the system to make wide-spread changes in how they would continue both classes and services in spring of 2020 and in FY2021.
- iii. Library committees across the system worked on and shared plans for helping students and faculty during the pandemic.
- iv. Fourth year Acquisitions staff has managed the voucher process for UMPI, UMF, UMM, and UMFK.

c. Campus

- i. Library staff helped other departments organize information during the spring semester and summer due to the COVID 2019 pandemic
- ii. Trio and the Reserves department made more texts available for students

d. Departmental

- i. The upstairs was completed with carpet and new furniture.
- ii. Head of Technical Services resigned.
- iii. Library staff started working from home March 20, 2020 due to the pandemic with all at home by April 2.
- iv. A painting by a local artist that was commissioned roughly 1.5 years ago for the cost of materials is expected to be completed and installed by spring of 2021. Artist is Michelle Richardson.

2. Goals and Future Plans

a. Future Plans

- i. Update library web site to include a front facing site and other navigational changes. *(This goal was delayed due to a number of issues beyond our control. We hope to be able to make changes to the library site this upcoming fiscal year).*
- ii. Provide specialized training to library staff to support their departmental skill set. *(This goal was primarily for the staff member who left, however, during the time of working at home, we encouraged other staff to take the opportunity to work on various skill sets they wanted to improve).*
- iii. Streamline Annual Report to make it less cumbersome and time consuming. *(Staff accomplished some streamlining, but due to a staff member leaving and the pandemic, this was no longer a priority. We will still continue to review ways to not only gather statistics more easily, but to eliminate any we don't need anymore).*

b. Long Range Goals

- i. Continue updating library facilities physical appearance. *(In the past year+ the library has had asbestos removal, reconfiguring of space, new carpet upstairs, new furniture, painting, and new flooring on the quad side. There are still a few areas that need to be addressed, but we have come a long way to reaching this goal).*
- ii. Work with UMS libraries to find a way to support faculty with the growing (and necessary) trend in Open Educational Resources (OER). *(Library staff received a \$1,000 grant to provide two \$500 stipends to faculty to adopt an OER text and materials. As of yet, no instructors have stepped up for the challenge).*
- iii. Complete ongoing specialized content projects that may also include online access (e.g. recent photo acquisitions, John Martin papers, UMFK newspapers)*(Halfway through the year we lost our Tech Services Librarian. This particular goal is on hold until we can get our cataloging staff in order).*

I. Final comments from the Associate Director:

This was a crazy year to say the least. It started off exciting with new flooring and furniture, then carried through the fall semester doing the usual day to day work with a variety of ups and downs. Then the fall semester ended with the resignation of our Head of Tech Services, and unbeknownst to us, a pandemic had begun on the other side of the world. By March, classes were moved to online, areas of campus began to close, and students, staff, and faculty started working from home. Soon after, the library closed. Even at the end of this fiscal year, we still worked from home.

Reference services obviously changed from person to person to all online. It was more imperative that our electronic resources, catalogs, and discovery services were working and accessible. Reference staff reached out to students, faculty, and staff to let them know we were still here by chat and email. Staff built new guides to provide information on the COVID-19 pandemic as well as guides for other departments who needed information online and accessible. And, in general, staff did as reference staff would do, but from home.

Circulation stopped completely once the library closed. Occasionally, an item was sent via mail or checked out to UMFK staff or faculty. Staff had to think of new procedures for accepting returns, once the courier started delivering again. All efforts in the circulation department went to reserves and helping faculty and students get through the semester with the necessary class materials.

Parts of Tech Services stopped, such as cataloging and processing donations. Acquisitions and Serials continued due to spring work with the Ebsco serials renewal order and other daily and weekly tasks. Most all print serials were cancelled since most would end up recycled before anyone actually read them (their being recycled is due to how long we keep them in house). The handful of serials that staff kept had to do with their being local materials that we keep in Special Collections or due to the nature of their subscription.

Throughout this whole time, staff were troopers. They had to learn how to work from home and they used remote desktop to access their work computers. They learned how to Zoom, a video conference software, and kept up with the monthly, sometimes weekly and daily, changes in our work protocols. Occasionally, staff had to go into the library to handle physical aspects of work like scanning, checking in materials, managing mail and so on. Thankfully, many of our tasks could be done from home since many are done online. And with the annual report around the corner, there was plenty of work to do.

This year's annual report will look nothing like our previous years. The statistics will most likely be paltry due to the sudden drop in all services across the spring semester as well as the standard decline we have been experiencing over the last few years. This was a strange year, more specifically, a strange spring. The Associate Director has decided that the spring semester will be known as "The Spring the Stats Stood Still."