

Director, MIT Libraries

The leadership of the [MIT Libraries](#) underwent substantial change in academic year 2015. Chris Bourg, former associate director of the Stanford University libraries, began as the new director of the MIT Libraries in February. Interim Director Steve Gass transitioned into the leadership of the Collections Directorate while a new associate director was recruited. Steve will retire in September.

Armand Doucette, formerly executive director of Technology Services at MIT's Sloan School of Management, started as associate director for Information Technology and Digital Development in July 2014. Gregory Eow, formerly Charles Warren Bibliographer for American History at the Harvard Library, was appointed as the new associate director for collections in August 2015.

Organization

There were two major changes to the Libraries' organizational structure. The Information Delivery and Library Access department, responsible for access services throughout campus library locations, was moved from the Collections Directorate to the Academic and Community Engagement Directorate. A new department was added to the Information Technology and Digital Development Directorate—Technology Planning, Integration, and Experience—which includes project and portfolio management as well as oversight of the User Experience and Web Services teams.

A new senior position—Director of Community Support and Staff Development—was created in May to lead the Libraries' efforts in these areas. Nina Davis-Millis, former head of Information Technology and Discovery Services in the Libraries (and housemaster of Random Hall), was named the first director, bringing deep knowledge and experience to the position. Among her responsibilities is the design and delivery of services and resources that support the lives of MIT's many communities, an ongoing role in support of diversity efforts at the Libraries and the Institute, and additional attention to staff development. Initial activities in the late spring included sessions on "Supporting Students in Crisis" and early planning for a weekly mindfulness event in the Barker Library's Great Dome. The goal of additional support for staff development is to integrate new and existing components into a coherent and intentional program that directs activities and resources across a broad spectrum of the library staff. Areas of focus include professional development travel, critical skill training, early-career professionals, programs for interns and fellows, mentoring, workshops, and a series of speakers.

Diversity and Inclusion

The Libraries continue to strive to increase staff diversity. Currently, 14% of the libraries' staff are members of underrepresented minority groups (13% of administrative staff and 16% of support staff). Although this represents an increase over previous years, much work remains to be done in recruiting and developing a more diverse staff.

The Libraries' Committee for the Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion was especially active in FY2015, with eight scheduled events that drew nearly 300 attendees. These events were designed to promote awareness of issues related to diversity, inclusion, and bias, and to provide skills for creating a more inclusive and welcoming work environment. Of particular note was the Libraries' written response to the Institute's community and equity officer's report, "Advancing a Caring and Respectful Community." Several dozen library staff gathered over the course of a month to discuss and articulate ways in which the Libraries could play an active role in achieving the goals presented in the report.

Academic Support

The Libraries provided active support to the MIT community for compliance with emerging mandates around research data, including implementation of an MIT-customized data management plan tool. In addition, the Libraries played a key role, partnering with MIT's vice president for research, in campus efforts to establish and promote open researcher and contributor identification.

Progress on the MIT Faculty Open Access Policy initiative was marked by a number of milestones:

- A Support Team for Open Access Requirements was established to support researchers' compliance with federal granting agencies' requirements for open access.
- Working with the Office of General Counsel, the Libraries released an updated MIT amendment to publication agreements for faculty. The change was made in support of the White House Directive ensuring that faculty retain sufficient rights to meet federal funder requirements.
- An automatic manuscript deposit was launched for American Physical Society journals, one of the largest publishers of articles written by members of the MIT community.
- A web-based article download statistics site, OAstats, was developed and launched to provide aggregated download data for the public and individual article download data for authors.
- There was a 37% increase in submission of articles in relation to the open access policy, now totaling more than 17,000 since 2009.
- A new monthly download peak of 106,000 was reached in June, with a total of more than 1.1 million downloads in FY2015.

Services

- There was a significant expansion of orientation and community outreach activities beyond first-year students in response to the Student Well-Being Initiative.
- To gain access to more content for the MIT community, the Libraries added the Borrow Direct Plus collaboration.

- With the support of a d'Arbeloff Grant, staff explored key factors required for an effective “flipped classroom” approach to library instruction.
- The Libraries’ partnership with MIT’s Office of Digital Learning (ODL) was strengthened by establishing regular meetings of the ODL staff with the library instruction team, resulting in the development of a web-based guide to open educational resources.
- Several library teams were formed to explore needs in data visualization, digital scholarship services, and digital humanities services.
- The Aga Khan Documentation Center continued to grow in effectiveness and stature, gaining international recognition as a research center for the study of material and visual culture in Muslim societies.

Collections

The Libraries acquired an extensive electronic book archive of 54,000 titles from the publisher Springer, bringing the total number of licensed electronic books to approximately 600,000—or about one-third of the total monograph collection. In addition, significant progress was made toward a solution for local hosting of electronic books when other options do not exist.

A major print collection analysis was completed for the Hayden and Barker libraries, improving access to high-demand print materials and informing storage decisions. Staff also began reviewing select portions of the Libraries’ uncataloged (“hidden”) collections in the Library Storage Annex (Building N57) to determine which materials warrant attention and subsequent storage offsite. A pilot project is expected to begin early in FY2016.

Significant progress was made in advancing digital preservation, including testing and implementing several new tools for the management and preservation of digital archival materials: ArchivesSpace, Curator’s Workbench, BitCurator, Archivematica, and AtoM. An audio digitizing project served as a timely vehicle for defining, documenting, and implementing content management workflows addressing three core needs: managing physical or analog content, digitizing content, and managing digital content. Now in place, these workflows are applied to content in all formats. Finally, the Rights Working Group developed infrastructure and workflows to advance objectives in digitizing and sharing collections.

Space Planning

A ten-month Phase Two Space Planning project culminated in March with a report, written by Shepley Bulfinch Architects, detailing efforts by the Department of Facilities, MIT Campus Planning, several subcontractors, and a core team from the Libraries to assess the current state of the Hayden, Barker, and Rotch libraries, and to develop conceptual options for Building 14. Further action on large-scale space planning will await completion of work by the Ad Hoc Task Force on the Future of Libraries at MIT. The task force will be convened in the fall of 2015 and is expected to complete its work by the end of the 2015 academic year.

Technology

A Strategic Technology Framework Initiative developed over the past year delivered an updated view of the state of technology in the MIT Libraries. Plans to pursue an advanced digital library by transforming systems and capabilities are under way. The perspective of an external group of library technologists is currently in progress and will be received in early FY2016.

Other technology highlights include:

- The Discovery Team researched the current state of discovery in academic libraries and produced a report with recommendations to improve the Libraries' discovery environment.
- The User Experience and Web Services Team developed and launched a new library homepage in the summer of 2014, with major improvements in the usability and ease of access to content and services across the entire website. That was followed by a major launch, in March 2015, of a redesigned news site to accompany the Libraries' re-envisioned and expanded news program.
- The Libraries' hybrid-cloud infrastructure sourcing strategy is expected to deliver computing systems and resources by drawing on a combination of private information technology services and public cloud vendors.
- Transition of mission-critical computer and storage systems to Information Systems and Technology continued to improve reliability and redundancy.
- Further migration of desktop support from library information technology staff to Information Systems and Technology staff continued successfully.

Sponsored Research in the MIT Libraries

The Libraries' Program on Information Science, led by Micah Altman, continued to attract support for projects in a number of areas, including data management and protection (US Census Bureau, the National Digital Stewardship Alliance, Microsoft Corporation), data transparency, collection, participation and reproducibility (Sloan Foundation, Harvard Berkman Center/Microsoft partnership, University of Florida/Public Mapping Project), enhancing teaching and learning (National Science Foundation, Association of Research Libraries), and scholarly communications (Sloan Foundation, Open Researcher and Contributor Identification, Wellcome Trust).

In addition, Nancy McGovern (head of Curation and Preservation Services), participated in several sponsored projects in the area of digital preservation management. Sponsors included the National Science Foundation/University of Minnesota; Institute for Museum and Library Services/Council on Library and Information Resources; Institute for Museum and Library Services/Harvard University; and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Resource Development

Following an 18-month interval without a permanent director of the Libraries, Chris Bourg's February arrival and immediate fund-raising activities were most welcome. Not surprisingly, total giving levels for FY2015 dropped by about 20% from FY2014, but that is expected to be turned around quickly. Responses to a June appeal letter were very encouraging, with total donations far exceeding last year's June responses. In addition to several donor visits and other events and activities in the spring, a new Giving website was developed and launched in March.

Chris Bourg
Director of Libraries