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“Save Our History!” Collaborating to Preserve the Past at UMass Boston

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“Save Our History!” Collaborating to Preserve the Past at UMass Boston

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University Archives and Special Collections in the Joseph P. Healey Library at UMass Boston

SUMMARY

Sparked by the 50th anniversary of the founding of the University of Massachusetts Boston in June 1964, University Archives and Special Collections (UASC) staff in the Joseph P. Healey Library collaborated with departments across campus to carry out a wide range of initiatives, all focused on locating, accessioning, preserving, and sharing the physical evidence of the university’s history. This poster outlines the various collecting activities, outreach methods, digitization projects, and dogged detective work that resulted in the addition of more than 2,500 linear feet of unique historic materials to the University Archives, as well as a number of well-received public events and exhibitions.

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MARKETING PLAN

Lesson Learned: *Identify and proceed with a clear plan that closely follows a marketing campaign*

What worked for us:

- Developed clear, direct message: *Save Our History!*
- Identified, developed plans for working with various constituencies: students, alumni, faculty and staff (current and retired), administrators, community members
- Identified current, potential collaborators: History Dept., Communications staff, Alumni Affairs, etc.
- Identified outlets for communications: email, social media, listserves, department and library websites, campus publications, local and regional media
- Communicated regularly with campus and library stakeholders regarding budgets, staffing, processes; Explored diverse funding opportunities

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Lesson Learned: *Explore and be open to different avenues for promotion*

What worked for us:

- Developed consistent and clear handouts and informational webpages, revised as necessary
- Included information about *Save Our History!* in all departmental communications and presentations related to UMass Boston’s history and anniversary
- Worked with library staff and leadership to explore different ways of promoting campaign
- Staff interviewed about campaign for WUMB-FM
- Designed *Save Our History!* slides for campus television monitors
- Worked with student newspaper to promote related events, including Mass. Memories Road Show



Flyer created for *Save Our History!* campaign outlines collection policies, department services, and key stakeholders.



Carolyn Goldstein, UASC’s Public History and Community Archives Program Manager, was interviewed for a segment on WCVB-TV’s *Chronicle*.

More than 200 people attended a UMass Boston-themed Mass. Memories Road Show in May 2014. Learn more about the Road Show by visiting blogs.umb.edu/archives



NOTABLE SUCCESSES

- University created and implemented a Records Management System; UASC included in process of creating policies, consultation with Archives is now formal part of process
- Collaborated with Communications staff to include UASC in workflow for online “Share your Story” submissions
- Secured funding for student staff in collaboration with Chancellor’s Office
- Created an exhibit of university photographs and publications that is on display at the UMass Club in downtown Boston
- Integrated UASC collections, staff, and expertise into campus life and activities
- UASC seen as essential, collaboratively-minded stakeholder on campus

PROVIDING ACCESS

Lesson Learned: *Be open to collaboration and work to maintain a service-oriented approach*

What worked for us:

- Created distinct categories for organizing collections: Records, Photographs, Publications
- Fielded electronic and in-person research requests
- Collaborated with Communications staff and campus stakeholders on 50th anniversary publicity and events
- Hired graduate students and embarked on major digitization project of historic university photographs and documents
- Developed ways for students to incorporate university history into coursework in ways that benefit campaign
- Conducted research and provided reference services for 50th anniversary book



COLLECTING OPPORTUNITIES

Lesson Learned: *Create and take advantage of opportunities*

What worked for us:

- Held UMass Boston-themed Mass. Memories Road Show, collected 240 images and 40 video interviews
- Launched community-engaged “Park Square Memories” project in collaboration with UMass Boston alumni
- Construction on campus led to many departments relocating; more than 2,500 LF of documents collected as a result
- Made sure UASC was involved in developing formal records management policy for campus
- Some of our best finds came through staff’s persistence in “running down rumors” about previously undisclosed storage rooms



Discovered as part of our collecting activities, this image shows a page from the first meeting of TASK FORCE: OPERATION UMASS-BOSTON, a group that began meeting on June 26, mere days after the university was formally established in 1964.

UMass Boston graduate students have been working more recently on inventorying the more than 2,500 linear feet of materials collected as part of this campaign.



FUTURE PLANS

- Incorporate *Save Our History!* activities into library’s existing liaison program
- Design and install exhibitions in library’s Grossmann Gallery about UMass Boston history, showcasing materials collected through the campaign
- Launch UMass Boston oral history project, in collaboration with campus stakeholders
- Revise and disseminate policies for continued archival acquisitions
- Offer presentations and instructional sessions for librarians and library staff, as well as members of campus community
- Incorporate materials collected through the *Save Our History!* campaign into department’s existing research instruction program

OUR EXPERIENCE