UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON
MEMORANDUM

August 24, 2012

To: Varda Konstam, Chair of the Executive Committee, Faculty Council

From: Edward Miller, Chair, Library Committee

Subject: Scholarly Communication in the Digital Scholarship Age

The Library Committee met to discuss the Proposed Guidelines for ScholarWorks at UMass Boston, as per your request. The committee voted to bring to the Executive Committee important motions that deal with recent developments in scholarly communication and publishing in the digital age. These motions are coupled with new directions calling for open access to scholarship and research to foster knowledge and societal development including the NIH and NSF requirements to make funded research available to the public in general.

Preamble

The spirit of the Committee on Scholarly Communications proposed in the motions is to provide faculty with a safe harbor to avoid relinquishing all copyrights to publishers who might charge the author for using his or her own work in teaching, sharing with colleagues, and for use in presentations, etc.

The University of Massachusetts Boston is not the only institution working to secure that the rights of faculty authors are protected and that their scholarship can be shared with the community at large, one of the underpinnings of the urban mission of the campus. In that same spirit, recently, the University of Kansas joined with 21 other colleges and universities – including Arizona State, Columbia, Duke, Emory, Harvard, Oregon State, Stanford, and Trinity universities as well as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Oberlin College – to form the Coalition of Open Access Policy Institutions, or Coapi, to advocate for open access policies on their campuses, as well as on a national level. Read more about this here: http://chronicle.com/blogs/wiredcampus/universities-join-together-to-support-open-access-policies/32632

Understanding the relevance of having an environment that fosters research and provides a safe harbor to faculty and other members of the campus community, the Library Committee submits to the Executive Committee and its Chair the following:

Three Motions:
(1) To formally adopt the Proposed Guidelines for ScholarWorks@UMass Boston
(2) To establish a campus Committee on Scholarly Communications
(3) To adopt a campus-wide open access policy with a no-questions-asked opt-out option
Motion #1: That the Proposed Guidelines for ScholarWorks@UMass Boston, prepared by a committee appointed by Provost Winston Langley and chaired by Professor Kenneth Rothwell (Classics), be formally adopted by the University of Massachusetts Boston. The Proposed Guidelines are available for review here: http://blogs.umb.edu/archives/scholarworks

Discussion: The Proposed Guidelines for ScholarWorks@UMass Boston have previously met with the approval of Provost Langley.

In addition to providing an open access archive of articles and other works that have already been published, the institutional repository, ScholarWorks, serves as an excellent vehicle for working papers, conference papers, theses, dissertations, or other works not published elsewhere. The intellectual and creative contributions of the university will be easily accessible and discoverable by internet search tools, thus offering higher visibility and enhanced scholarly communication for the UMass Boston community.

If adopted, these guidelines will help the Library handle questions that regularly arise in the course of its administration of the University’s institutional repository for scholarship and research, ScholarWorks. Without accepted guidelines in place, the Library is unable to provide definitive answers on a variety of questions that have emerged since the ScholarWorks repository was established in the Spring of 2010, such as questions concerning appropriate repository content, copyright issues, author agreements with publishers, acceptable use of repository content, and preservation and access needs associated with repository content. If adopted, the Library will ensure that these guidelines are widely available to the UMass Boston community.

Motion #2: That the University of Massachusetts Boston establishes a Committee on Scholarly Communication, which will report jointly to Faculty Council and the Provost, to mitigate issues concerning scholarly communications and open access publications at the University of Massachusetts Boston, particularly as they pertain to ScholarWorks, the University’s institutional repository.

Discussion: An important component of the Proposed Guidelines for ScholarWorks@UMass Boston concerns the establishment of a Committee on Scholarly Communications at the University of Massachusetts Boston. This committee, which will report jointly to Faculty Council and the Provost, will provide guidance on a variety of potential issues ranging from open access publishing to standards surrounding the creation of journals and other peer-reviewed digital publications in ScholarWorks.

Motion #3: That the University of Massachusetts Boston adopts a campus-wide open access policy with a no-questions-asked opt-out option for faculty members and researchers. A proposed draft of this open access policy is available here: http://blogs.umb.edu/archives/scholarworks
Discussion: Too often, faculty members and researchers sign away copyright of their work to the publisher at the point of publication. This can lead to frustrating and often unexpected outcomes, such as a faculty member or researcher or the institution being required to pay to provide access to the author’s own published work to students.

While many faculty members and researchers are interested in broad access to their research and scholarly output, too often this research and scholarship exists behind pay-walls and is closed off to researchers without the necessary credentials.

If the University of Massachusetts Boston were to adopt a campus-wide open access policy with a no-questions-asked opt-out option for faculty members and researchers:

- The University of Massachusetts Boston would assert, on behalf of campus authors, the right of that campus author to make their work (or a version of their work) freely available to the public in an open access institutional repository, such as ScholarWorks@UMass Boston.
- The University of Massachusetts Boston would not claim any ownership over the scholarly work of the campus author, but would only ask that a copy of the scholarly work be included in the campus’ institutional repository, ScholarWorks.
- Campus authors would retain the right to share, promote, revise, and commercially reproduce any version of their work.
- Should a campus author, for any reason, wish to opt out of this open access policy for a given work or publication, they will be able to easily do so with no questions asked.