



University of Massachusetts Amherst

Search for the Dean of Libraries The University of Massachusetts Amherst Amherst, Massachusetts

SEARCH SUMMARY

The University of Massachusetts Amherst (“UMass Amherst” or “UMass”), the state’s land-grant university and flagship campus of the University of Massachusetts System, seeks a collaborative, mission-oriented, and community-centered leader to serve as the next Dean of University Libraries. This is an opportunity to lead the largest state-supported academic library system in New England and to join a dynamic R1 university community with a deep commitment to social change and the creation of a better world.

The next Dean will join UMass Amherst at a transformational moment. The University has recently welcomed a new Chancellor and Provost who join the vibrant community of dreamers, innovators, creators, and scholars. New leadership inspires new strategic direction, and [a new strategic plan](#) is being developed with the release set for Fall 2024, setting the stage for UMass Amherst to continue to lead the way into the future of public higher education. The new strategic plan has focused on five guiding principles: education; research, creative activity, translation, and knowledge transfer; engagement; inclusivity, wellbeing, and sustainability; and financial and operational viability.

The next Dean of Libraries will champion the libraries as a place where students, staff, and faculty can pursue their intellectual passions; where resources for learning, teaching, and scholarship abound; where new modes of scholarly inquiry and discovery can be explored, supported, and shared; where community members can gather and exchange ideas; and where the University's ideals of openness, inclusivity, and societal betterment flourish. The Dean will have the opportunity to build upon the Libraries’ excellent reputation for data management and preservation, its on-going development of open educational resources and software in collaboration with UMass Amherst faculty, its pioneering work on transformative licensing agreements for scholarly resources, its active national role in open science, its contributions to the international development of the open-source library services platform FOLIO, and the continued growth of the Robert S. Cox Special Collections and University Archives Research Center and the W. E. B. Du Bois Center. Reporting to the Provost, the Dean of Libraries will work collaboratively with senior leaders across campus and a passionate Libraries team, offering strategic partnership and tactical support. UMass Amherst seeks a seasoned professional with a commitment to transparency and

clear communication, a servant-leadership mindset, and inherent enthusiasm for the role Libraries play in education and society more broadly. The Dean of Libraries must possess the professional experience and insight to grasp the strategic, administrative, structural, and financial requirements of a complex academic research library at a flagship land grant institution.

Isaacson, Miller, the retained global executive search firm, is assisting the search committee and UMass Amherst in this recruitment. Confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Founded in 1863, UMass Amherst was initially established as Massachusetts Agricultural College under the Federal Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act. Today, with its 12 colleges and schools, it is the flagship and the largest of the five campuses of the statewide University of Massachusetts system.

UMass Amherst supports its community, its state, and the nation. It is estimated that the University's impact on the Massachusetts economy is \$2.5 billion. UMass Amherst is constantly identifying new ways to prepare students for lives as citizens, professionals, and leaders in the state: in the past five years alone, the University has launched new degree programs in biomedical engineering, data analytics and computational social science, finance, informatics, interdisciplinary studies, managerial economics, materials science and engineering, public policy, and veterinary technology, in anticipation of or in response to the needs of the state and society.

UMass Amherst serves approximately 32,000 students (24,000 undergraduate and 8,000 graduate students) in 12 schools and colleges, taught by over 1,400 (including over 1,000 tenure-track) faculty. Federal, state and private sourced sponsored research projects are led by more than 800 faculty with expenditures of more than \$240 million. UMass Amherst enrolls more first-year students from Massachusetts than the Commonwealth's top eight private universities combined. UMass Amherst has nearly 300,000 alumni worldwide, the majority of whom live and work in the state. They provide the essential workforce for the booming Massachusetts economy. The University is in the heart of the Pioneer Valley, offering a rich cultural environment in a rural setting close to major urban centers. The University is among the largest employers in the region and the engine of the local economy. With its elevated national profile, the University is a magnet for talented faculty, substantial state funding, and an increasingly competitive student body.

Public service and social justice are the core of UMass Amherst's unique identity and purpose. The University is home to the papers of W. E. B. Du Bois, as well as the papers of Horace Mann Bond, Jodi Picoult, the Irma McClaurin Black Feminist Archive, and hundreds of other collections documenting the lives and work of innovators, activists, political figures, and spiritual leaders.

The University is located in the historic Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts, about an hour from the scenic Berkshires, two hours from Boston, and three hours from New York City. The campus includes more than 13 million square feet of buildings. The University's transformational investment of \$1.8 billion in facilities during the past decade has created a revitalized learning and living environment. This decade of renewal has focused on new and renovated facilities, including classroom and learning buildings, administrative offices, research laboratories including core facilities, a student union, athletics facilities, and many other impressive projects. Ongoing [Capital Projects](#) continue to refurbish existing buildings and invest in new facilities. The town of Amherst is a diverse and inclusive community, bustling with shops, bookstores, and restaurants, and the University and nearby colleges, cities and towns offer a wide variety of cultural events, lectures, and art museums and galleries.

In 2018, UMass Amherst acquired a secondary instructional and residential site (the former Mount Ida College), eight miles from Boston, Massachusetts, as a center for student experiential learning and professional development. The Mount Ida Campus of UMass Amherst is home to the Wadsworth Library, which is part of the University Libraries. The goal of efforts at Mount Ida is to facilitate connections between UMass Amherst and the Greater Boston region, thereby amplifying UMass Amherst's impact in the Commonwealth.

LEADERSHIP

Chancellor Javier A. Reyes became the 31st leader of the University of Massachusetts Amherst on July 1, 2023, following his selection as chancellor of the commonwealth's flagship campus by the UMass Board of Trustees.

Chancellor Reyes is an economist who has devoted his career to the cause of public higher education, holding leadership positions at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), West Virginia University, and the University of Arkansas. He most recently served as interim chancellor of UIC, Chicago's largest university campus. Born and raised in Mexico, Chancellor Reyes is the first Hispanic person to serve as Chancellor of UMass Amherst. Chancellor Reyes received his bachelor's degree in economics from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Campus Estado de Mexico, in 1998, and his doctorate in economics from Texas A&M University in 2003. He is actively engaged with the TIAA Diversity Council and the Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA).

Chancellor Reyes was formally inaugurated on April 26, 2024.

Provost Fouad Abd-El-Khalick joined the university in late summer 2024 with more than two decades of dedication to research, teaching, and service missions at flagship public institutions. Most recently, he served as Dean of the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Before that, he spent 16 years at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he served as the Head of the Department of Curriculum & Instruction and Associate Dean of Research for its renowned College of Education.

An elected Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), Dr. Abd-El-Khalick is a leading international science education researcher whose scholarly contributions on teaching and learning about nature of science have earned him the National Association for Research in Science Teaching's top lifetime achievement honor, the 2022 Distinguished Contributions to Science Education through Research Award. He was also honored as the sole winner of the 2021 Kuwait Prize in economics and social sciences (specifically, educational sciences) from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS), which recognizes the stellar scholarly contributions over 20 or more years of Arab scientists across the globe.

Dr. Abd-El-Khalick earned his bachelor's degree in biology, his secondary science teaching diploma, and his master's degree in science education from the American University of Beirut in Lebanon. He received his doctorate in science education from Oregon State University.

THE LIBRARIES

The [UMass Amherst Libraries](#) include the W. E. B. Du Bois Library, home of the Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Business materials, archives and special collections, the Digital Media Lab, the Graduate Commons, and central Library services; the Science and Engineering Library, home of Physical and Life Sciences materials; and the Mount Ida Wadsworth Library on the site of the former Mount Ida College, home of the majority of the Veterinary Technology materials. The Libraries are supported by a dynamic team of approximately 115 creative and energetic staff, archivists, and librarians, who have developed and sustained the Libraries' reputation for service excellence. Their dedication to the University and their community is deep; staff turnover is low, and the sense of ownership and pride high. UMass Amherst has several bargaining units; library staff are represented by the University Staff Association (USA) and the Professional Staff Union (PSU); librarians are represented by the Massachusetts Society of Professors (MSP), which is affiliated with the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) and the National Education Association (NEA). Together, the Libraries make up the largest publicly supported research library in New England, with more than 8 million physical and digital items available to users. The UMass Amherst Libraries is an ARL (Association of Research Libraries) member institution.

At 28 stories tall, the W. E. B. Du Bois Library is the tallest academic library in the world and houses the Robert S. Cox Special Collections and University Archives Research Center (SCUA), which includes the papers of W. E. B. Du Bois, Horace Mann Bond, Jodi Picoult, the Irma McClaurin Black Feminist Archive, Daniel Ellsberg, Kenneth R. Feinberg, and thousands of other collections documenting the lives and work of activists, innovators, political figures, spiritual leaders, writers, and working people of New England. SCUA is internationally known as a resource for understanding global social change movements and the activists who drive them and has served as a well-known hub for research in the field of social justice. Committed to access, SCUA and the Libraries' Systems Department began the development of [Credo](#), an online repository containing the digital collections, in 2009. These collections reflect UMass Amherst's long-standing identity and commitments to social justice inquiry.

Historically, UMass Amherst has been recognized and celebrated for its leadership in the field of librarianship. The Libraries were early adopters of the learning commons model, open educational resources (OER), and open access (OA); they were also leaders in digitizing resources and the digital humanities. In 2020, UMass Amherst Libraries – as part of the Five College Consortium – were early implementers of FOLIO, an open-source library services platform.

The Du Bois building is home to a multitude of resources and support services internal to the Libraries and external to campus partners. Campus community resources within the Du Bois building include, but are not limited to, the Learning Commons, the Learning Resource Center, the Writing Center, Financial Aid Services, the Office of Faculty Development and the Faculty & Librarian Commons, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Instructional Design unit. These spaces host library services, as well as services and units that complement but sit outside the Libraries. Their location in the Du Bois building reflects the reality that the Dean of Libraries must be a leader and a builder not only of the Libraries but of the larger community of activities, programs, and key stakeholders contained within its buildings.

CONSORTIA AND ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Collaborative decision-making and shared governance are an integral part of the identity of UMass Amherst. This identity is present in the Libraries in multifaceted ways, including the organization of various councils and consortia that serve as a strategic resource for the Dean.

Internally, the Library Leadership Team is composed of Assistant and Associate Deans; the Department Heads Management Group represents major functional units within the Libraries' Divisions; the Research Library Council of the Faculty Senate represents the faculty by advising the Dean on issues of operations, policy, fundraising, collection development, etc.; the Librarians' Council represents the librarians in the Massachusetts Society of Professors union by advising the Dean on librarian needs, issues of operations, policy, etc.; and the Staff Council represents staff in the Professional Staff Union and the University Staff Association and non-unit staff by advising the Dean on staff needs, issues of operations, policy, etc.

Externally, UMass Amherst Libraries is part of the Five College Consortium, which fosters academic excellence through resources, joint departments, and inter-campus collaboration. The Five College Consortium includes UMass Amherst, Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, and Smith College. The Dean is a member of the Five College Librarians Council, composed of the deans and directors of the five colleges to jointly govern consortia undertakings. Additional external consortia and resources include the Boston Library Consortium, which empowers a coalition of libraries in the northeastern United States to share knowledge, infrastructure, and resources at scale; the University of Massachusetts System, which works with the other libraries in the UMass System to negotiate a number of e-resource contracts; and FOLIO, an international effort among libraries, networks, vendors, and developers to create open source software that meets the needs of twenty-first century libraries.

FINANCES

The annual operating budget of the Libraries is approximately \$22 million. The acquisitions budget is \$10.2 million. Fundraising continues to be an integral aspect of furthering the support for and success of the Libraries. Historically, the Libraries raise approximately \$1.5 – 2.0 million annually through philanthropy and gifts in kind.

To learn more about the UMass Amherst Libraries, please [explore here](#).

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Reporting to the Provost, the Dean of Libraries oversees 9 direct reports with a full team of approximately 115 staff, archivists, and librarians, a \$22 million annual operating budget, and all facets of the strategic, administrative, structural, and financial requirements of a complex academic research library at a flagship land grant institution. Working closely with the university leadership and library faculty and staff, the Dean of Libraries will engage the following opportunities and challenges:

Collaboratively advance a compelling, forward-thinking vision for the UMass Amherst Libraries.

UMass Amherst has a robust tradition of leading in the field and making bold commitments. This is as true in the Libraries as it is across the campus as a whole. The Libraries' explorations in and commitments to open access, open educational resources, and open source software such as FOLIO, which date back to the early 2000s and continue to this day, testify to this tradition. Working with the Libraries' innovative and creative staff, the next Dean will have the opportunity to work collaboratively to extend this tradition of boldness, build on its current strategic directions, and build a strategic vision for the coming years.

The new Dean will have the opportunity to work with the Libraries community and stakeholders to revisit the [Libraries' strategic plan](#) in the context of the new University-wide strategic plan. Support for faculty scholarship can be further advanced and strengthened through the Libraries' continued investment in open access and scholarly communications. Earlier in 2021, UMass Amherst developed framework principles for provider agreements to guide the Libraries' scholarly content and infrastructure; the operationalization of those principles is ongoing. In addition, balancing investments in physical, electronic, and personnel resources remains a priority, as does maintaining, rejuvenating, and reimagining the Libraries' facilities. And, particularly important, the Libraries must continue to be a critical element in the University's student success strategy.

Pursue and cultivate partnerships with units across campus and beyond.

Excellence in service is a hallmark of the UMass Amherst Libraries. The Libraries' staff continue to create and innovate in support of the strategic goals of the Libraries and University with a focus on enabling student success. While the Libraries' reputation of excellence in service is deservedly strong, there is

opportunity to increase the reputation of the Libraries as a strategic partner across campus. The Dean will play an important and visible role in generating excitement across campus about the Libraries' relevance and importance, facilitating collaboration with all academic units, and building campus awareness of the Libraries' resources, services, and capacity to support the teaching, research, and creative activities of the community. The Dean will work with campus leaders to ensure that the Libraries are equipped to meet the increasing demands of university research and will serve as a leader in supporting opportunities for open educational resources. The Dean will sustain strong channels of communication across the University to determine the best ways to support students, faculty, and staff while leveraging the expertise of the Libraries team to forge connections and establish partnerships.

As the largest public library in Massachusetts, there is also significant opportunity for the next Dean to be a visible leader and library advocate in the broader Amherst area. The Dean will have an enduring drive for community impact, striving to leverage the Libraries facilities and resources in ways that further integrate the Libraries into academia, campus, and community life.

Enhance the organizational structure and shared governance culture of the Libraries to recruit and retain a talented and diverse team.

The depth of staff commitment to and pride in the UMass Libraries cannot be overstated; the Libraries have developed a strong institutional identity as a place of high professionalism and one that advances openness, creativity, innovation, equity, and access. The incoming Dean will recognize and bolster the contributions of this remarkable community and actively nurture consultation, as well as the health and morale of staff. The Dean will lead with transparency, mutual respect, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal engagement, inspiring and earning trust both inside the Libraries and with the broader campus. By encouraging ongoing professional development, soliciting feedback from the community and key stakeholders, and intentional delegation, the Dean will establish a clear organizational structure that invites their colleagues to lead alongside them. In creating a culture of collaboration, the next Dean will actively listen and lift up ideas for change and build connections and knowledge amongst unionized staff, archivists, and librarians that highlight the work of and roles in a large and geographically dispersed team.

Institutionally, UMass Amherst has a fundamental commitment to building an inclusive campus community, taking action to combat racism and all forms of discrimination, and upholding principles of equity and diversity. The next Dean will demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of how to animate that commitment in a library setting. This will include but not be limited to hiring and retaining staff of underrepresented identities and from diverse backgrounds and supporting those who are already part of the UMass community.

The Libraries' principles of equity and anti-racism have implications beyond people and culture. The next Dean will continue to honor and support the Libraries' approach to think about current collecting practices, collection development, and description with an eye toward equity and inclusion, building on the distinctive identity of the Libraries and its history, particularly in special collections.

Amplify, advocate, and champion the work of the Libraries.

In the midst of an information and data revolution, awareness of the activities of a library system can, in many cases, be somewhat limited; many users tend to engage with libraries primarily as patrons, not wholly grasping the complexity of the issues that libraries confront or the work they do. The Dean will promote a fuller sense of the Libraries, raise their profile, emphasize their agency, and expand community awareness of the full range of resources, offerings, and expertise contained within. The Dean will position the Libraries as critical drivers to the success of the University, garnering interest and goodwill as they continue to drive the Libraries forward to stay at the leading edge of innovation in the field.

Externally, the Dean will build relationships with organizations and individuals. The Dean will promote the Libraries to attract collections, scholarly attention, and philanthropic support. Donor cultivation will be a key priority for the incoming Dean, who will actively partner with the UMass Foundation to build, sustain, and steward relationships with donors, intentionally and creatively connecting philanthropic support with the diverse array of opportunities in the Libraries. The Dean will also continue to strengthen ties to other institutions and maintain UMass Amherst's leadership in the field.

Serve as an astute manager of financial and human resources.

The Dean will possess a deep administrative management skillset, with the ability to weigh competing priorities, calculate risk and reward, and balance strategic aspirations and day-to-day operational demands. The activities of the Libraries and the Du Bois building itself draw on personnel and services from departments across campus. This is a complex operation; the Dean will pay attention to intra- and inter-institutional relationships; address facilities and maintenance requirements for all Library spaces; understand resource management and allocation; and anticipate future directions and demands. In this work, the Dean will be collaborative, open, informed, communicative, able to make evidence-based decisions, and act decisively.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Dean will be a thoughtful and proactive leader with a record of professional success in the world of research or public libraries. The Dean of Libraries will welcome collaboration at all levels and possess the drive, creativity, and care that will inspire those working in and with the UMass Amherst Libraries.

The ideal candidate will possess many of the following experiences, competencies, and personal qualities:

- ***Professional experience and knowledge:*** Breadth and depth of experience in research libraries; understanding of the mission and public purpose of institutions such as UMass Amherst. Intellectual and organizational curiosity; nuanced understanding of the issues confronting academic research libraries. Enthusiasm for and openness to collaboration and partnerships; passion for service to others. Understanding of the resource requirements of academic units; a

record of successful work with donors in securing collections and raising funds or related experience.

- **Leadership experience:** Demonstrated strategic insight, with the capacity to craft and execute an organizational vision that aligns with overarching institutional goals. An appetite for informed risk and boldness, balanced with openness to feedback, commitment to incorporating feedback, and appreciation for organizational realities. Orientation to act, coupled with respect for the interests, contributions, and expertise of others. Institutional sophistication, including the ability to read organizational cultures and articulate the importance of the Libraries. A leadership style that builds excitement through direct dialogue and emphasizes teamwork, mutual respect, effective communication, consultation, and transparency.
- **Demonstrated commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion:** Evidence of actions and achievements in strengthening all with respect to workplace culture, campus engagement, community engagement, institutional programming, and library priorities for acquisition, cataloging, and exhibits. The ambition and ability to stake a leadership position in the University and beyond its campus in advancing strategy, tactics, action, and social and organizational change in service to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- **Managerial experience:** Exquisite communication skills – listening skills and expressive skills – that inspire, build trust and confidence, and motivate. Follow-through and timeline sharing. Follow-up on decisions made, particularly when they do not align with feedback from library staff and other stakeholders. A history of transparent, inclusive administrative management in settings comparable to UMass Amherst. Demonstrated record of successful stewardship of physical, financial, technological, and human resources. Aptitude for leading organizations and supporting staff through times of change.
- **Personal qualities:** Commitment to support, develop, and further the mission, vision, and institutional values of UMass Amherst. Flexibility, patience, good problem-solving skills, high emotional intelligence, and resilience, with a good sense of humor preferred. Positive energy, talent, and enthusiasm for engaging in the life of the campus. Openness, humility, and personal and professional integrity.

TO APPLY

The University of Massachusetts Amherst has engaged Isaacson, Miller, a global retained executive search firm, to assist with this search. While the search will continue until an appointment is made, for optimal consideration, please submit materials by Friday, October 25. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed electronically and in confidence to:

Sean Farrell, Partner (he/him)
Hannah Moore, Senior Associate (she/her)
Drew Chang, Search Coordinator (she/her)
Isaacson, Miller

[Dean of Libraries, University of Massachusetts Amherst](#)

UMass Amherst is committed to a policy of equal opportunity without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, disability, military status, or genetic information in employment, admission to and participation in academic programs, activities, and services, and the selection of vendors who provide services or products to the University. To fulfill that policy, UMass Amherst is further committed to a program of affirmative action to eliminate or mitigate artificial barriers and to increase opportunities for the recruitment and advancement of qualified minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and covered veterans. It is the policy of the UMass Amherst to comply with the applicable federal and state statutes, rules, and regulations concerning equal opportunity and affirmative action.