Downtown Branch Library

The Downtown Library opened on Tuesday, October 28, 2014, bringing library services to students attending classes at the Healthcare and Workforce Development Center at 25 Federal Street.

The librarians will offer instruction sessions in the downtown classrooms and assist with information needs and research assignments on demand or by appointment.

The hours in room 121D are currently 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Thursday. A suggestion box at the desk encourages students and faculty to give feedback on the new branch library, which offers study space for students and two rooms for group work. There are eight computer workstations, as well as six desks with partitions for reading and study.

Major portions of the reference, reserve, nonprint and circulating collections in the health sciences have been moved from the Alden Library. Students can either use them in the Downtown Branch or borrow circulating items for the usual three weeks. The same online database access is available as well. —Denise Cross

A Brief, Possibly Wondrous, Guide for the One Book Initiative

The Library has crafted an interactive Library Guide to support this fall’s One Book project. The Guide offers a multimedia background to help faculty and students appreciate the richness of Junot Diaz’s novel The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao — the fall 2014 “campus read.”

The guide offers print and video interviews with the MIT-based author, including a fascinating sit down with Bill Moyers.

Students can do an online search to find background on Diaz’s fellow Dominican-Americans who have created new lives in this country. Students can also use the guide to search for scholarly criticism of Diaz’s works.

The Books portion of the guide links to recent works about New Americans, including novels by Julia Alvarez and Angie Cruz. Interested readers will be able to compare the characters and settings created by Junot Diaz with those of some of his contemporaries.

Another guide section looks at the rich history of Paterson, NJ, Wao’s gritty stomping ground. Did you know Paterson’s “godfather” was Alexander Hamilton? That a sometime Worcesterite contributed to a mass walkout by Paterson’s mill workers? Or that Allen Ginsberg penned an ode to the City by the Falls?

—Michael Stevenson

Professional Development Collection


To boost student comfort in the academic environment, Buffy Smith reworks her dissertation interviews and conclusions to suggest a new paradigm for mentoring.

From the perspective of sociology, Smith unpacks the “hidden curriculum” which lurks behind campus cultures, operating with assumptions alien to minority, low-income, and first-generation students. Then she argues not just for better ways of explaining all this to students, but for a high-octane form of mentoring, empowering students to be the agents of their college experience.

Smith advocates that faculty and staff mentors go beyond brief office visits to engage socially—sharing coffee or lunch. They might also escort mentees to appointments with the advising center or a financial aid counselor. Even more important, the mentor can share their “social capital,” expanding the student’s academic sphere by making introductions through accidental meetings or by formal appointments.

Smith illustrates her points with a running dialog between a student and her mentor. Smith developed these composites from the personalities and remarks of faculty and staff mentors, program facilitators and mentees, forecasting a corresponding impact on results. —Dale LaBonte
There was quite a manufacturing buzz around QCC during October, National Manufacturing Month. Let’s continue the theme a bit longer with a look at the fate of one feisty U.S. company in a domestic furniture industry that is a shadow of its former self.

Virginia’s Bassett Furniture Co. had been the globe’s biggest producer of wood furniture until liberalized trade opened the U.S. market in the 1980s. In its glory years Bassett dominated the life of its home town—also named Bassett, of course. Macy’s protagonist is CEO John Bassett III, a third-generation factory hand. The book delves into his multipronged efforts to preserve the jobs and skills of hundreds of Virginians, along with the soul of a community.

Readers will be struck by Bassett’s will to prevail when so many of the plants in his region have gone under.

Fellow author Jonathan Alter said of this book, “Beth Macy has done a masterful job in personalizing the biggest American economic story of our time—how to save American jobs in the 21st Century.” Macy reports for Virginia’s daily Roanoke Times, in which her coverage of the Bassett story began. She has garnered over a dozen national journalism awards, including a Nieman Journalism Fellowship at Harvard.

—Michael Stevenson

New Staff in the Alden — and Downtown — Library

Say hello to two new staff members when you see them at the Circulation Desk on the Main Campus or the Downtown Branch Library. Over the summer, Jeffrey Trites and Caitlin Barlow joined the Alden Library staff.

Caitlin earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University, where she was the Library Circulation Desk Supervisor. She brings to the College 11 years of combined experience in customer service and library circulation. Caitlin staffs the Alden Library Circulation Desk in the afternoon and evening.

Jeff is a graduate of St. Michael’s College in Colchester, VT with a Bachelor of Science degree in math and economics. He worked in the college library for two years in addition to serving as a math tutor for three years. Originally from Bennington, VT, he relocated to Worcester this summer.

Caitlin and Jeff both also staff the Information Desk on the second floor of the HLC. Jeff anchors circulation at the downtown campus.

—Dale LaBonte

QCC’s reference librarians have gone a little wild in developing new interactive guides. The range has grown, from course-specific examples in HUM, SPH, ENG, SCI — to a new Nursing guide. Topics relevant to many programs are covered. The MLA and APA style pages show students how to format their citations properly. These guides are peppered with relevant examples. They also link to print, web, and multimedia services that may offer more, or better-illustrated, examples.

This fall there were resources for the One Book a project, the Sankofa Lecture series and for the display on elections and voting. New guides also address persistent issues like hate crimes and bullying.

When a library instruction session calls for specialized resources, or a course uses particular books or websites, the challenge to make these sources easy to find is quickly met by this web authoring software (and web hosting) from Springshare. Tiger Swan, Denise Cross, Michael Stevenson, and Dale LaBonte all have experience with building new guides.

Faculty members whose course materials or research assignments would benefit from a customized resource list may want to discuss options with one of the reference librarians. A basic guide can quickly be developed over a week, while more in-depth or interactive guides take more time to assemble.

—Dale LaBonte

Adjunct Corner: New Guides — from MLA Style to Subject Specials

Factories Man: How One Furniture Maker Battled Offshoring, Stayed Local — and Helped Save an American Town, by Beth Macy.


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—Michael Stevenson