

University of Vermont Libraries

Staffing

On behalf of the Dean's Council

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Level of staffing:

UVM (University of Vermont) staffing has declined over the years from 100 in FY08 to 76 in FY21. Staffing covers three separate library buildings, the Howe Library, the Dana Medical Library, and the Silver Special Collections Library. In addition, there was a hiring freeze during the pandemic so, as staff retired or left for new positions, the libraries were unable to rehire in a timely manner. There are currently almost 20 open positions, or soon to be open positions. As a result, library administration is taking this opportunity to conduct systematic staff planning to determine how to configure these positions to meet the needs of UVM constituents. Staff are working with a consultant to identify new work being done on campus and rethinking open positions to support this work. Official staff planning should be completed early in the Fall of 2022; however, it will likely take months to hire staff to fill positions.

The UVM libraries are currently not staffed at a level necessary to support work similar to that of other flagship institutions. For instance, digital collections and digital preservation needs can't be met by current staff levels and our low level of IT staffing limits our ability to be innovative.

It is questionable whether UVM libraries is sufficiently staffed to play a leadership role in the state, despite these aspirations. It would be helpful for library administration to better understand what UVM libraries could be doing to support the priorities of the state and the state libraries.

Compensation:

UVM is a unionized environment (both faculty and staff). Librarians are considered faculty. The benefits offered by the university are generous, but compensation is weak. Compensation for both librarians and library staff are not in line with what is offered at peer institutions. As a result, the libraries have experienced a number of unsuccessful job searches for open positions. This is a situation not unique to the libraries but common throughout the university.

Professional Development:

Faculty have healthy professional development funds as negotiated by their union. The UVM libraries recently became members of the Boston Library Consortium, in part to help supplement professional development opportunities for all staff. In addition, as the staffing plan develops, training and professional development opportunities will be identified to support staff whose positions may evolve to meet new needs. The newly formed staff union has negotiated for additional centralized professional development funds and more transparent systems of access to those funds.

UVM libraries does provide internship opportunities for people enrolled in MLIS/MLS degree programs.