USM Libraries is pleased to announce the launch of the Digital Commons@USM at http://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu. Digital Commons@USM is an institutional repository, or digital collection, of USM materials including faculty research, scholarship and creative activity. Many kinds of materials can also be placed in this repository including: student research, theses and dissertations, conference proceedings, library special collections materials, archives of the student newspaper and yearbooks, music and theatre programs, performances and much more. Most kinds of media are supported.

At USM, faculty research and scholarly output has been difficult to locate. Student research is often not preserved at all. Some faculty scholarly work is found on individual faculty web pages, some on department pages, some on a college page, and some not accessible at all. Metadata is often lacking or is not consistent, which means it is not well-organized and not exposed to discovery on the web. Many universities have developed institutional repositories to address these issues.

Digital Commons is administered by the Libraries as a web-based, local digital collection and serves as a permanent digital archive for these materials. Metadata is attached to all materials so they are readily discoverable by web browsers. Research and scholarly output is selected and deposited by the individual faculty member, university department and program on campus. Issues of copyright, permissions from publishers and concerns of the authors are all part of the established process and will be handled by the Library.

The Digital Commons is still in its early stages of content development. We invite faculty and departments to submit materials for posting and encourage you to visit the Digital Commons at http://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu. Please email Casandra Fitzherbert at casandra@usm.maine.edu or call 780-4279 for more information or with questions.
Check out the Research Skills Toolbox

Any good worker knows that you need the right tool for any job. The Library’s new Research Skills Toolbox puts online units full of instructional tools into the hands of faculty. Whether assigned as homework or used in class, the videos, exercises, and quizzes help construct the support that’s so vital to student learning.

Digitally introduced by a faculty member, each unit of instruction addresses one set of research skills. Questions such as, “What is a peer-reviewed article?” or “Can I use a paper I wrote for another class for this class?” are answered through videos, PDF documents, exercises and more while simple quizzes provide the needed assessment of student learning in each area.

Designed to be as basic as a wrench and as easily handled as a polishing cloth, the Research Skills Toolbox is available as an open-source utility to anyone who wants to use it. No passwords are required: http://usm.maine.libguides.com/researchskills

Sage Advice From Dear Crabby

Dear Busy,
I have a schedule that would make your head spin, and I’m wondering how I’ll be able to get all the research done for the papers I have to write this semester. My professors are telling me to use library resources and not just Google, but I only go to campus twice a week and when I am there I’m in class all day, so how am I supposed to get to the library?
~Busy in Buxton

Dear Crabby,
Stop stressing! In many cases “getting to the library” is as simple as sitting down at a computer and going to http://usm.maine.edu/library. We recognize that our students are busier than ever, so in recent years, the USM Libraries has switched as many of our journal subscriptions as possible from print to online access. We also have over 50,000 e-books, all of which are available from any place with an internet connection. So as much as we’d love to see you in the USM Libraries, you don’t have to come to campus to “use” the libraries. Just get out your USM card, use our AskALibrarian link on the website, and most important – don’t forget to breathe!
~Crabby
Faculty Commons in Glickman Library

An exciting new venture has arrived on the third floor of the Glickman Library. A Faculty Commons, currently facilitated by Judy Spross from the School of Nursing, is an opportunity for significant collaboration by faculty.

Programs in mentoring new faculty, inter-campus communication using Google Hangouts, and videoconferencing are just some of the ideas anticipated for the new space. See usm.maine.edu/facultycommons/programming for current schedule of programs.

The faculty will showcase their methods, service and research, inspiring other faculty to excel in a workshop-rich, academic environment.

The Faculty Commons is a work in progress, growing over time, and faculty are encouraged to visit the third floor of Glickman to envision what could be possible in this new collaborative space.

Some sprucing up of the physical space is complete. Eventually it will extend beyond the office area, adding to a new design of the space. The remainder of the floor will still be used as student study space and to house collections.

For more information please contact the Faculty Commons:

Email: facultycommons@usm.maine.edu
Web: usm.maine.edu/facultycommons

We are also supporting a pilot project for the College Algebra courses, offering weekly time-on-task sessions with the use of MyMathLab.

ESOL students will select a group session aligned with their levels of comfort and proficiency. There will be weekly groups for practicing pronunciation and exploring issues associated with acculturation to college. Additionally, there will be workshops on USM resources and academic strategies, including how to work with a Reference Librarian to assist with research.

For more information contact Paul Dexter: pdexter@usm.maine.edu (207) 780-4228

From the Learning Commons

Academic support at the Library Learning Commons has been offered primarily through individual tutoring. Starting this fall, we are expanding the group aspect of our service model through strengthened partnerships with the Math Department and the English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program.

Students in both Math 9 and Math 101 will be able to participate in group study sessions facilitated by our math tutors in Gorham, Portland, and online (via Google Hangout).
To the Ends of the Earth … and Back: Selections from the Jay I. Kislak Polar Collection

September 24, 2013 to February 27, 2014

Gallery hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., also on the OML website.

This traveling exhibition offers an historical overview of polar exploration and the ongoing process of globalization as depicted in maps, charts, books, and artifacts from the Kislak Polar Collection. It begins with the Greek and Roman concepts of Terra Incognita (unknown land), then continues with the search for the Northeast and Northwest passages to Asia and ends with the ultimate challenge: to reach the South Pole, the end of the earth.

It was curated by Arthur Dunkelman who selected over one hundred objects spanning five centuries and documenting European expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic and their subsequent impact on popular culture and globalization.

Mr. Dunkelman is Director of the Jay I. Kislak Foundation based in Miami Lakes, Florida. The Foundation was established in 1984 by Jay and Jean Kislak to foster greater understanding of the cultures and history of the Americas and the early history of navigation, exploration and discovery. In 2004 they donated over 3,000 documents, maps, paintings, prints and artifacts related to early American history to the Library of Congress. Since then, the Jay I. Kislak Collection has become the focal point of a major exhibition, Exploring the Early Americas, and is integral to an ongoing program of research, education, and public activities at the Library of Congress.