

## **Episode 1: Meeting the Challenge of a Global Pandemic**

### **Omar Brown**

Welcome to Libraries Out Loud, a podcast produced by the University of Buffalo Libraries. I'm your host, Omar Brown, Evening Supervisor at the Silverman Library on the UB's North Campus. In each episode of the Libraries Out Loud, we'll explore connections between the UB libraries and the research, learning, teaching and creative activities about faculty, students and staff. In this our inaugural episode. Evivva Weinraub-Lajoie, Vice Provost for University Libraries, and Terry McCormack, Interim Associate University Librarian for Digital Strategies, are joining us for a conversation about the ways in which the UB's Libraries have responded to the COVID 19 global pandemic. Evviva, let's start with you. It's been nearly a year since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. During that time, there have been significant changes to the Libraries services and spaces. What are some of the steps that you have taken to keep people safe while they are studying in the Libraries?

### **Evviva Weinraub-Lajoie**

So, in each library building, we expect everyone to follow the university's health and safety guidelines, including wearing a mask at all times, maintaining social distancing, frequent hand-washing, staying home if you feel sick. Now, these measures have been in place since the start of the pandemic and will be continued to be followed during the spring semester.

### **Omar Brown**

Terry, can you share with us some of the ways the UB Libraries have reconfigured the physical spaces within the Libraries to support the social distancing measures?

### **Terry McCormack**

Our facilities team has been overseeing this aspect of our operation. Some of the steps we have taken to ensure the safety of our students, faculty and staff include reconfiguring the physical space, removing some of the furniture and installing plexiglass barriers at our service desk and increasing the number of hand sanitizer stations in each of the library buildings.

### **Omar Brown**

In terms of the pandemic, what are some of the challenges confronting the Libraries?

### **Terry McCormack**

Monitoring our library spaces to ensure that everyone is following University health guidelines and safety guidelines. This would include masking and social distancing and making sure that the students are functioning safely in the Libraries.

### **Omar Brown**

Evviva, can you take a few moments to describe some of the other measures that the Libraries have put in place in response to the COVID 19 pandemic?

### **Evviva Weinraub-Lajoie**

Sure. So, the libraries have made it easy for people to borrow and return library materials. We have a new self-checkout app that is available via your smartphone. We have self-checkout kiosks in the Lockwood, Abbott, and Silverman Libraries to return library items. You don't need to enter the library, but you can use one of the convenient book drops located outside of Abbott, Lockwood, and the Law Library. We've installed touchless print stations powered by the UB Print Anywhere app, and we are expected to have lockers up and running by the beginning of spring term for pickups. Additionally, we have also increased monitoring across the library, as Terry said, and we are hoping to bring on board our Social Distance Monitors in the spring semester to help us with compliance.

### **Terry McCormack**

Yes. As you know, Omar, instructional support is an important service we provide. Silverman is providing a number of video recording services, such as the studios. Our staff can guide you through the process of creating a class podcast or presentation. In addition, working with UBIT, we've established touchdown spaces in Silverman Library for faculty to teach from. Also, we have the mobile teaching carts that are placed in those areas that really work as portable teaching podiums. So, the faculty can teach remotely in a safe environment. And of course, in July, we started the development of the Teach Anywhere website for the University Faculty. That gives them a singular source of information as far as instructional support.

### **Omar Brown**

As part of the closing remarks, it's more like a testimonial. Students in the beginning of the semester were really concerned about their Delivery+ materials being able to come and pick them up, reserve them to see if the service was going to still be available and by the end of the semester, they have proven to be very appreciative that we still held that service and it seemed time to go on for the spring semester. Going into the spring semester, I'm sure they're going to

appreciate even more of the services that you have available for them. Now Terry, as for the recording studios, it has been a tremendous help to the professors who at one point where they couldn't go into their classes and teach directly in front of the students. So, our technologies that we had invested in the early part of this year has really paid themselves tenfold. The One-Button studios have definitely become like a one stop shop. Professors would come in. They will have their PowerPoint presentations, we can provide a real time, a live key for them to, they can see exactly what they talk about through their PowerPoint presentations and within a four-hour time period to our recording and it's like a four-hour turnaround. We will edit it according to their specifications and what they need, and then we will upload their course video file to their Panopto account. In addition, you may notice changes when you return to campus for the spring 2021 semester. Lockwood Library on UB's North Campus and Abbott Library on UB's South Campus will now have swipe access with your UB card and when studying into Silverman Library, please stop by the library service desk at third floor to check in. So, it's important to remember to bring your UB ID card when visiting the library this semester. One more thing I want to mention before we go, I want to remind our listeners of the library hours for the spring 2021 semester. Abbott Library on UB's South Campus hours will be Mondays through Fridays 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturdays 12 noon to 4 p.m. Sundays 12 noon to 8 p.m. Lockwood Libraries on UB's North Campus hours will be Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Fridays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays, 12 noon to 4 p.m. and Sundays 12 noon to 8 p.m. Silverman Media Library, which is also on UB's North campus hours will be Mondays through Fridays, eight a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturdays, 12 noon to 4 p.m. and on Sundays, 12 noon to 8 p.m. Before signing off. Is there anything else you want to share with our listeners?

### **Evviva Weinraub-Lajoie**

Absolutely, Omar. Over the fall semester, we received a lot of feedback from students, faculty and staff who were coming in and using the library and its resources. And we made changes and modifications to our services and to the way that we have our physical spaces laid out and working for our students and our faculty. That feedback is phenomenal and wonderful, and we want more of that, so please keep sending in your comments. Keep sending in your suggestions and we're going to do our best to make this the best and safest semester possible.

### **Terry McCormack**

As Evviva said, we're taking the feedback and we're taking it seriously and we are always modifying our environment for safety, and we'll continue to do that through the spring semester.

### **Omar Brown**

Oh, that is great. It is great. Thank you, Evviva. Thank you, Terry, for joining us today. We are looking forward to a successful spring 2021 semester. We hope you will join us the next time for a conversation with digital archivist, Sarah Cogley, who will discuss an exciting initiative currently underway in the University Archives to document the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the UB community.

