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UNH Admitted to Elite Library Consortium

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DURHAM, N.H. -- After a year of extensive reviews, the University of New Hampshire has been admitted to the elite Boston Library Consortium -- the only member of the consortium from New Hampshire.

Founded in 1970, the Boston Library Consortium is a cooperative association of 19 academic and research libraries that share resources so the collective strengths of the group advance the research and learning of the members' constituents.

"Membership in the Boston Library Consortium affirms the reputation of our faculty and the collections we have built at UNH," says Claudia Morner, university librarian.

Consortium members include some of the most well-known research institutions in the nation: MIT, Brown, the Marine Biological Laboratory/Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Boston University, Boston College, the campuses of University of Massachusetts, Brandeis University, Tufts University, Northeastern University, Wellesley College, Williams College and the University of Connecticut, as well as the Boston Public Library and Massachusetts State Library.

As a member of the consortium, UNH faculty, faculty emeritus, students and staff at both the Durham and Manchester campuses will have full access to a combined collection of more than 31 million volumes via interlibrary loan and on-site visits to member libraries.

"UNH will contribute to the support of programs of graduate study and/or research, especially in the sciences with strong collections in humanities, social

sciences and professional programs. UNH's Special Collections are especially strong in primary material relating to the history of New Hampshire, items that make a strong contribution to the BLC," says Barbara Preece, executive director of the Boston Library Consortium.

UNH participated in a rigorous, one-year evaluation process that included a site visit, submittal of extensive data about the university's collections, and evaluations of the quality of the university's library resources in support of scholarly research. Prior to admitting UNH, the consortium had not granted membership to a new institution since the early 1990s, when Brown joined.

"In the process of being reviewed for Boston Library Consortium membership, we had to show that we have an excellent collection and library faculty who are active in the profession," Morner says.

In addition to the free interlibrary loan and on-site use of member libraries, UNH constituents will benefit from borrowing privileges; the collective buying power of all members, who have a combined collection budget of \$57 million; professional development opportunities for library faculty and staff; and programs that UNH could not offer on its own, such as a 24/7 reference service that will launch Nov. 12.

"Many UNH staff members are participating in the newly established task forces that are investigating a variety of topics so that we may better serve our constituency. Also, I should note that UNH is participating in the BLC's latest initiative, a virtual reference project that will be launched this fall," Preece says.

Consortium membership also enhances UNH's ability to support other institutions within the state. "We still will actively participate in the New Hampshire College and University Council (NHCUC), work with our sister institutions Keene State and Plymouth State, and continue to loan library materials to all the public libraries in New Hampshire. This membership will provide better access to research collections not available in New Hampshire," Morner says.

For more information on the Boston Library

Consortium, visit www.blc.org.

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