
Following a 2012 accord with Florida Atlantic University Libraries in the USA, the American University of Nigeria, Yola, has begun e-library loan collaboration. The kick-off was signaled Monday, July 2, by FAU's Carol Lewis West, Assistant Director Communications, Cultural Affairs and Donor Relations, in a correspondence to AUN.

The high point of the interlibrary loan deal is that AUN faculty, staff and students can now request up to 30 electronic photocopies of periodicals, conference papers, government documents and other materials each month from FAU’s interlibrary loan department while FAU now has access to borrow materials and resources on Nigeria, Africa and other parts of the world, which are available in the AUN system.

Dean of University Libraries at FAU, Dr. William Miller, was enthusiastic about the arrangement and said, “We are glad to assist this young institution in providing access to its faculty as they establish their research programs.” He added that the deal with AUN is FAU’s second agreement for special services with an international library. Since 2001, FAU Libraries have sent electronic copies of materials to the Papazian Library at the American University of Armenia in Yerevan.

The objective of the agreements is consistent with FAU’s reputation of forging distinctive alliances, serving diverse communities while expanding international outreach. It also reinforces the good will of FAU Libraries, which primarily uses WorldCat, a global network of library content and services that uses the web to connect 72,000 member libraries in 174 countries, as its main source for sharing research and resources.

Interlibrary loan librarian, Troy Christenson, who also doubles as coordinator at FAU Libraries, explains the institution’s motive thus: “Sharing our resources enhances our ability to borrow materials for our university community. The more our budgets shrink, the more it will continue to drive up demand for these services. We must borrow because we cannot purchase or store all of the materials.”

Mr. Amed Demirhan, University Librarian at AUN reiterated that the library must contribute its quota to the full realization of the founding vision, which is to become the leading development university in Africa and the region. This vision is what necessitated the drive for partnerships. “Part of our function as a library is to implement that vision and search for broader opportunities. FAU is only a first step, additional we will go on fast track with other universities.” In his view, “This agreement is a big window for us and will allow our faculty access to current scholarly resources.”

The interlibrary loan deal is expected to meet the diverse needs of AUN’s growing student and faculty population, as more requests are made for research materials. With features like 24-hour internet connection, uninterrupted power and state-of-the-art facilities, the new agreement with FAU will assist AUN’s quest to augment its database on research and development.

Meanwhile, AUN has continued to strengthen its efforts in community service, initiating cooperation with Federal College of Education, Yola, to provide e-learning, resource sharing, and training. AUN has also agreed to create weekend training programs for FCE students and faculty members, focusing on the critical analysis of information and open-access sources. Both institutions agreed to come up with proposals to access national and international grants.

Additional areas of concern discussed at a meeting on Thursday, July 12, include collaboration in teacher training for early childhood education, agricultural skill acquisition, and other areas that will impact the Yola community.

The University Librarian who initiated the liaison, said he is “… excited about this partnership program that will lead the college on the e-learning path.” President Margee Ensign, also at the meeting, noted that AUN is fortunate to have resources and feels obliged to share them. She then handed over a flash drive to the FCE Headmist, Mr. Abdulraufi Sadiq, to symbolize the new ties between the two institutions.

FCE Librarian, Mr. Dahiru Aiyu, said that the College leadership was overwhelmed by the fruitful visit. “University can be said to be successful without impacting its immediate society,” he said. “AUN has done that and more.”

Both parties agreed to work together to facilitate internet access sharing, as well as reorganize College resources from print to online. The present internet access at the FCE is expected to improve with the cooperation coming on stream.