Biography for Dr. K. Matthew Dames

Extended Version

K. Matthew Dames, a nationally recognized scholar in copyright law and an experienced innovator in academic libraries, has served as university librarian for Boston University since July 2018. In this role, Dr. Dames serves as the chief executive, academic, administrative, and talent officer for Boston University Libraries, BU’s multibranch Charles River Campus library system.

Currently, Dr. Dames plays an integral role in BU’s strategic planning process as chair of the Subcommittee on Scholarly Resources & Services – Libraries, which is guiding the University in envisioning how the Libraries can support faculty and students in a digital, interdisciplinary, and collaborative environment. Dr. Dames is a member of several BU decision-making and governance bodies, including Provost’s Cabinet, University Leadership Group, and University Council. He also serves as acting director for the Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, BU’s distinctive collections division, which joined the Libraries in July 2019.

Dr. Dames is the first African-American to lead BU’s main library system and is the first African-American to earn the Ph.D. degree from Syracuse University’s School of Information Studies.

Prior to BU, Dr. Dames was associate university librarian at Georgetown University, where he led a division that included special collections, principal collections, branch libraries, and the copyright and scholarly communications office. Dr. Dames was integral to advancing Georgetown's slavery, memory, and reconciliation initiatives as chair of the Library’s Steering Committee on Presidential Working Group Initiatives. In this role, he was the primary author on the committee's strategic report to the president and provost and led development of a partnership with the Maryland Province Jesuits that provided nearly $400,000 to process and digitize the archival records that documented the Jesuits' 1838 sale of 272 enslaved persons that supported Georgetown University’s early existence.

In addition, Dr. Dames led Syracuse University Libraries as interim dean, having chief academic, administrative, and management responsibility for an operation that included an academic press, university archives, audio archive, and a high-density storage facility. As dean, he secured the two largest, individual cash gifts in the library’s history and launched a media preservation initiative that addressed myriad needs for Syracuse's vast media collections.

Dr. Dames began his academic library career as founding director of Syracuse University’s Copyright and Information Policy Office, one of the nation's first full-time university copyright offices. In this role, he authored Syracuse's copyright policy, which has been copied in full or in part by more than 20 other American universities. He also founded the Association of Research Libraries’ UIPO listserv, which serves as a national network for copyright and scholarly communications officers in libraries and other cultural heritage institutions.

Dr. Dames earned doctoral fellowships from the National Science Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services and is the principal investigator on BU Libraries’ first grant award from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which focuses on developing and scaling executive talent.

Dr. Dames serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Association of Research Libraries (2019-2022) and the Board of Directors’ Executive Committee for NERL (2018-2021). He is a past board member of Reveal Digital in Ann Arbor, Michigan and was a 2018-19 Association of Research Libraries’
Leadership Fellow. He continues to conduct research on copyright law, policy, and history, emphasizing culture and norms of the media industries, and is an attorney and member in good standing of the Bar of Maryland.

Boston University Libraries (@bulibraries) serves more than 1.6 million visitors annually, on nearly 300,000 square feet of space across the Charles River Campus. BU Libraries is a member of several organizations, including the Association of Research Libraries, the Boston Library Consortium, the Coalition for Networked Information, the Eastern Academic Scholars’ Trust, and HathiTrust.

Founded in 1839, Boston University is one of the world’s largest private research universities. BU educates more than 34,000 students from more than 130 countries, offers more than 300 programs of study within 17 schools and colleges, employs 10,000 faculty and staff, and has 377,000 alumni. BU is a member of the Association of American Universities.