

ACRL Honors the 2026 Award Recipients

A Recognition of Professional Achievement

ACRL is pleased to recognize the recipients of its 2026 awards. The annual presentation of ACRL's awards enables ACRL to honor the very best in academic and research librarianship.

Trevor A. Dawes Named 2026 ACRL Academic/Research Librarian of the Year

Trevor A. Dawes, vice Provost for libraries and museums and May Morris University Librarian at the University of Delaware Library, Museums and Press, is the 2026 ACRL Academic/Research Librarian of the Year. The award recognizes an outstanding member of the library profession who has made a significant national or international contribution to academic or research librarianship and library development.

"The committee named Trevor A. Dawes as the 2026 ACRL Academic/Research of the Year in recognition of his extraordinary, career-long service to ACRL and the profession, his influential scholarship, and his work to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion within the profession," said Melissa Autumn Wong, vice-chair of the ACRL Academic/Research Librarian of the Year Award Committee. "As one nominator noted, Dawes has contributed to ACRL 'at every conceivable level,' including as a committee member and chair, eight-time national conference committee member, national conference chair, member of the Board of Directors, and president of ACRL."

"Beyond ACRL, Dawes has served as an ALA Councilor and on the ALA Executive Board, in multiple leadership roles within the Association of Research Libraries, and in numerous other national, regional, and state-level professional organizations," Wong added. "Throughout his career, Dawes has worked to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in academic libraries and the profession. Nominators cited his publications and presentations, his work as a trainer and consultant, and his formal and informal mentorship of colleagues as having had a profound and lasting impact on equity work in libraries. As one nominator wrote, 'Trevor's outreach and engagement, scholarship, and direct and indirect mentorship on DEI topics leads the field.'"



Trevor A. Dawes

“I am deeply humbled by this recognition and grateful to those who took the time to nominate me and support my candidacy,” shared Dawes. “Your confidence in my work means more than I can express. This honor belongs equally to my extraordinary colleagues at the University of Delaware Library, Museums and Press, whose creativity, resilience, dedication, and commitment to our communities make meaningful work possible every day. While I have never pursued my work in the field for recognition, it is affirming to be seen and valued by peers and colleagues across our profession as a reminder of why the connections we build with one another matter so much.”

Dawes is a founding partner of the consulting firm Inclusive Knowledge Solutions and has worked in the academic library sector for more than 20 years, developing and delivering service-enhancing training and professional development initiatives that positively impact library-wide projects and programs. He facilitates workshops on leadership, organizational development, and diversity designed to strengthen the knowledge, skills, and competencies of library professionals. An author and presenter, Dawes has written or edited books, chapters, and articles, and has presented at local, national, and international conferences. His publications include work on leadership in academic libraries, diversity, and organizational development.

Dawes’s extensive record of service to ACRL includes being a member and chair of numerous committees, including chair of the Leadership, Recruitment, and Nominating Committee (2023-2024), chair of the Professional Development Coordinating Committee (2006-2009), and member of the Diversity Committee (2019-2021). His service to the ACRL conference includes eight terms on various conference committees and acting as chair of the ACRL 2019 Conference. Dawes served as a director-at-large on the ACRL Board of Directors (2012-2015) and was elected to serve as ACRL vice-president/president-elect (2012-2013), president (2013-2014), and past-president (2014-2015).

Dawes is also an active member of ALA and served as a member of ALA Council (2008-2011, 2015-2018) and the ALA Executive Board (2017-2020). He has served on a variety of ALA committees, including co-chairing the Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (2014-2016) and chairing the ALA Council Committee on Diversity (2006-2007).

“I am delighted to recognize Trevor A. Dawes with ACRL’s top individual award,” said ACRL Executive Director Teresa Anderson. “His commitment to scholarship, service, and mentoring has been a major asset to the profession over the course of his career. I particularly value Trevor’s tireless work advancing ACRL, including serving on conference committees and our Board of Directors.”

In addition to his service to ALA, Dawes served as a Board member (2022-25) and president (2024) of the Association of Research Libraries. He was Board chair of the Greater Western Library Alliance (2021) and served on the Boards of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (2005-2007), National Information Standards Organization (2021-2027), NorthEast Research Libraries Consortium (2016-2024), and Center for Research Libraries (2025-2026).

Excellence in Academic Libraries Awards

The recipients of the 2026 Excellence in Academic Libraries awards are Flathead Valley Community College Library, Kalispell, Montana, and the University of Delaware Library,

Museums and Press, Newark, Delaware. Started in 2000, the Excellence in Academic Libraries Awards recognizes academic librarians and staff who work together as a team to develop academic libraries that are outstanding in furthering the educational missions of their institutions.

“I am thrilled that ACRL is again highlighting the many important contributions that academic libraries make to their institutions,” said ACRL Executive Director Teresa Anderson. “The 2026 award recipients exemplify strong commitment to innovation, scholarship, collaboration, and community. Receiving an Excellence in Academic Libraries Award is a tribute to each library and its entire staff for outstanding services, programs, and leadership.”

The Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) Library received the Excellence in Academic Libraries award for the Community and Junior College Libraries category.

“The Library at Flathead Valley Community College has outstanding collaborations with internal campus units and external community partners, all in support of the Flathead Valley Community College,” shared Beth McNeil, chair of the ACRL Excellence in Academic Libraries Committee. “The library is a true community hub, with a small but mighty staff!”

The library impressed the award committee with its ability to be nimble and adaptive, focusing on community building through conversations with patrons to constantly improve offerings. Three recent examples include the creation of the FVCC Archives, redesign of the One Button Studio, and cofounding the Small Libraries Interest Group in collaboration with The University of Montana Western. The library additionally developed a Makerspace for students, looking for coursework and program offerings to guide the acquisition of technology items in the space. The space is well-stocked with innovative technology, such as a GlowForge laser engraver, resin and filament 3D printers, sewing machines, stained glass, button makers, custom form makers, and more.

“We are beyond honored to receive the ACRL Excellence in Academic Libraries Award for Community & Junior College Libraries,” said Morgan Ray, FVCC director of library services. “Serving FVCC students, employees, and our local community has always been our north star, and we are proud and thankful to see this work recognized in the larger library community. As an academic community college library, we see learners of all ages come through our doors, from Makerspace events to author talks and 1:1 research instruction. We are honored to represent Montana and rural community colleges. We pride ourselves on our ability to be nimble and adaptive to help move the conversation from passive consumption of information to knowledge creation and application. Receiving this award is a sign that we continue to move in the right direction.”

The University of Delaware (UD) Library, Museums and Press received the Excellence in Academic Libraries award for the University Libraries category.



Staff of the Flathead Valley Community College Library

“The University of Delaware Library has impressive initiatives underway, including with AI, intensive data analysis, first year students and undergraduate research initiatives, intellectual freedom programming, and partnerships with creative communities, demonstrating sustained excellence and always connected the university mission,” McNeil noted.



University of Delaware Library, Museums and Press staff

The UD Library, Museums and Press centers this mission to cultivate learning, develop knowledge, and foster the free exchange of ideas through innovative programs that directly advance strategic priorities as a major research university committed to outstanding undergraduate education and societal impact. A collaboration with faculty on the Delaware Humanities-funded “Black Entrepreneurship in Wilmington” project demonstrates this commitment by uncovering previously hidden histories that enrich the understanding of Delaware’s diverse communities while addressing the university’s charge to engage with the state’s critical needs.

“To receive this recognition during such a demanding period for higher education and libraries makes it all the more meaningful,” stated Trevor A. Dawes, vice provost for libraries and museums and May Morris University Librarian. “The award is a testament to the resilience and dedication of my colleagues across the Library, Museums and Press who, despite the pressures we face, continue to advance teaching, learning, and research, deepening our commitments to open scholarship, experiential learning, and research support, while showing up for our campus and broader community in ways that are genuinely meaningful. I couldn’t be more proud of what we’ve built together.”

“As a welcoming hub of scholarship and intellectual freedom, UD’s Library, Museums and Press brings our mission to life every day,” UD President Laura Carlson shared in congratulating the Library, Museums and Press on this recognition. “They infuse creativity and collaboration into everything they do—from showcasing our exceptional primary sources and special collections to expanding digital resources, open educational materials and more. We’re incredibly proud of their work and deeply grateful for this well-earned recognition.”

Interim Provost William Farquhar echoed this sentiment, stating “The Library, Museums and Press has a transformative impact across the University. As just one example, their leadership in AI literacy addressed its pedagogical and ethical dimensions, ensuring that faculty and students engage with it critically and effectively. Thanks to their work, our graduates are better prepared for leadership in an increasingly complex world.”

Section Awards

CJCLS Community College Library Leadership Award

Recipient: Nelson Santana, associate professor / deputy chief and collection development librarian at Bronx Community College of the City University of New York. This award recognizes significant achievement in community college leadership. Santana was selected

for his scholarly work and his extensive service to the profession through local and national organizations.

CJCLS Community College Library Program Award

Recipient: Living Law Project, an annual event from Paul H. Thompson Library at Fayetteville Technical Community College. This award recognizes significant achievement in outreach or academic programs in community college libraries. The Living Law Project was selected due to its community collaboration and the team's and partners' commitment to student success.

CLS Innovation in College Libraries Award

Recipients: Tristan MK Draper, student success and engagement librarian at Beloit College and Mary Elizabeth Schiavone, student success and engagement librarian and federal depository coordinator, also at Beloit College, for Librarians Spill the Tea Podcast. This award recognizes small to mid-sized college or university library workers who demonstrate innovation in library services related to the ACRL Plan for Excellence.

DOLS Distance Learning Librarianship Award

Recipient: Jodi Poe, head of Library Services and editor of the *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning* at Jacksonville State University. This award honors an individual who has contributed to the success of distance and online learning librarianship through a specific project or initiative related to library service in higher education.

EBSS Distinguished Education and Behavioral Sciences Librarian Award

Recipient: Rachael Elrod, associate chair, departmental libraries, and director of the Education Library at the University of Florida. This award honors an academic librarian who has made an outstanding contribution as an education and/or behavioral sciences librarian through professional and scholarly accomplishments and service to the profession.

IS Ilene F Rockman Instruction Publication of the Year Award

Recipient: Darren Ilett, associate professor / teaching and learning librarian at the University of Northern Colorado for "Academic Libraries, Counter-Storytelling, and Minoritized Students' Scholarly Identity Development" (*Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 24, no 4, (October 2024): 765-87, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2024.a938742>). This award recognizes an outstanding publication related to instruction in a library environment published in the preceding two years and honors Ilene F. Rockman's professional contributions to academic librarianship in the area of information literacy.

IS Innovation Award

Recipients: Samantha LeGrand, clinical assistant professor and instruction and design librarian at the Purdue University Libraries and School of Information Studies; Jing Lu, clinical assistant professor at the Purdue University Libraries and School of Information Studies; and Zoeanna Mayhook, assistant professor and business information specialist at the Purdue University Libraries and School of Information Studies, for the Partners for Algorithmic Literacy (PAL) project. This award recognizes a project that demonstrates creative, innovative, or unique approaches to information literacy instruction or programming.

IS Miriam Dudley Instruction Librarian Award

Recipient: Kristina Clement, assistant director of academic engagement and instruction, collegiate librarians at the Kennesaw State University Libraries . This award recognizes an individual academic or research librarian who has built a record of contributions that have advanced the pursuit of teaching and learning. The award honors Miriam Dudley, whose pioneering efforts led to the formation of the ACRL Instruction Section (formerly ACRL Bibliographic Instruction Section).

PPIRS Marta Lange Award

Recipient: Jenny McBurney, government publications librarian and regional depository coordinator at the University of Minnesota Libraries. This annual award recognizes an academic or law library workers who, through research, service to the profession, or other creative activity, makes distinguished contributions to bibliography and information service in law or political science. The award honors Marta Lange, 1990-91 Law and Political Science Section (LPSS) Chair, whose exceptional talents as a leader were enhanced by a wonderful collegial spirit.

ULS Outstanding Professional Development Award

Recipients: Matthew Kibbee, evidence synthesis coordinator at the Cornell University Library; Megan Kocher, science and evidence synthesis librarian at the University of Minnesota Libraries; Amy Riegelman, social sciences and evidence synthesis librarian at the University of Minnesota Libraries; and Sarah Young, social sciences librarian and director of the evidence synthesis program at the Carnegie Mellon University Libraries, for the Evidence Synthesis Institute program. This award recognizes library, archives, or museum workers whose contributions to providing professional development opportunities for academic libraries have been especially noteworthy or influential. ♪