

Revised Standards for Libraries in Higher Education

The ACRL Board of Directors has approved a revision of the association's Standards for Libraries in Higher Education (SLHE). SLHE, adopted in 2004 and previously revised in 2011 and 2018, is designed to guide academic libraries in advancing and sustaining their role as partners in educating students, achieving their institutions' missions, and positioning libraries as leaders in assessment and continuous improvement on their campuses. The standards are a framework for library planning and assessment, particularly in regard to providing guiding principles, performance indicators, outcomes, and metrics for libraries to use in a variety of circumstances as they work with faculty and students in the higher education setting, achieving and measuring institutional learning outcomes.

A task force composed of members of the ACRL Value of Academic Libraries Committee reviewed SLHE as part of the usual five-year review process. The resulting revision of SLHE builds upon the foundation of the 2018 document with an added and intentional focus on the role of academic library personnel. The task force used the term *library personnel* instead of *academic librarian* or *librarian* to encompass the full range of staff who contribute to the academic library mission. Recognizing that library expertise is central to advancing teaching, research, and institutional effectiveness, the revised SLHE explicitly emphasizes expectations in core areas such as information literacy, scholarly communication, collection development, and discovery.

This emphasis affirms library personnel not just as support personnel but also as educators, collaborators, and strategic partners whose contributions are integral to the academic mission. By embedding library personnel expertise into SLHE, the task force aimed to ensure that this professional knowledge is both recognized by university leadership and valued by accreditation teams as a critical dimension of institutional quality. The board approved the revised SLHE at its April 30, 2026, virtual meeting. The revised standards are freely available on the ACRL website at <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries>.

UNC Charlotte Names 2026 Atkins Fellows

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte J. Murrey Atkins Library has named two fellows in the tenth year of the Atkins Fellows summer program. This program offers paid, full-time work experience for MLIS students at the midpoint in their library, archives, or information science degree programs, and graduates who completed their programs in the last year. Participation in the program includes an additional stipend to help fellows with housing and transportation costs. Each Atkins Fellow works on a project throughout the summer, participates in workshops, tours and panel discussions, and engages in department and library committee meetings. The purpose of the program is to prepare MLIS students and recent graduates to work in academic libraries, archives, and other institutions, while supporting the mission, goals and initiatives of Atkins Library. The 2026 Atkins Fellows are Bashi Hariharan Yasodha of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and Meredith Zeller of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Projects include work with open access and streaming video engagement. To learn more about the current fellows, alumni, and the program and projects, please visit library.charlotte.edu/atkinsfellows/.

JSTOR Transitions Path to Open Pilot to Ongoing Program

JSTOR has announced that Path to Open, a community-supported open access monograph program, will continue as an ongoing program following its three-year pilot phase. Launched in October 2023 to test whether a collaborative model could sustainably scale open access for humanities and social sciences monographs, Path to Open includes nearly 300 participating libraries, more than 50 university presses and scholarly publishers, and a corpus of titles that will reach 1,000 works by the end of 2026. The core design of Path to Open includes 300 new titles selected for inclusion in the program each year; library support through annual licensing payments to access titles for up to three years before they become openly available; and per-title payments to presses to help sustain monograph publishing without requiring authors or institutions to pay processing charges.

Early results from the first one hundred Path to Open titles, published in 2023 and openly available since January 2026, illustrate what this model can enable. Usage among participating libraries was strong during the licensed period and grew significantly once titles became openly available. In the first three months after opening, item requests increased by more than 440% compared to the full year of 2025, when the titles were available only through participating libraries. Over the same period, access expanded to more than 2,000 institutions from 228 and to nearly 160 countries from 12—highlighting the global demand for high-quality, peer-reviewed titles. Learn more about Path to Open at <https://about.jstor.org/products/books/path-to-open/>.

Johns Hopkins University Press, BioOne Announce Integration

Johns Hopkins University Press (Hopkins Press) and BioOne today announced their merger in a bold move designed to enhance community impact, expand future opportunities, and transform how they engage with researchers. BioOne's flagship aggregation of bioscience research journals, BioOne Complete, as well as their eBook collections, will continue as discrete and independent products within Hopkins Press. The union promises significant operating efficiencies and combined scale with Hopkins Press's Project MUSE, the widely used collection of journals and books in the humanities and social sciences. Both organizations were early adopters of the equitable open access model *Subscribe to Open*. Hopkins Press and BioOne are committed to a smooth and transparent transition for all stakeholders with minimal disruption of day-to-day operations. The deal is expected to close on August 31, 2026, subject to final governance and legal approvals.

The State of U.S. Academic Libraries: Findings from the ACRL 2024 Annual Survey

ACRL recently released the report "The State of U.S. Academic Libraries: Findings from the ACRL 2024 Annual Survey." The 2024 Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey results show academic libraries adapting to a rapidly shifting information landscape and expanding access for users. While disparities in staffing and funding persist across institution types, libraries continue to play a vital role in supporting research, instruction, and student success. ACRL is committed to advancing, and advocating for, academic libraries and library workers in that role. Continued participation in the survey is essential to ensure libraries remain visible, valued, and equipped to meet the evolving needs of higher education. This report focuses on US academic libraries in fiscal year 2024 (the 2023–24

academic year). For the first time this year, the results are weighted to be representative of all US academic libraries, unless otherwise noted. Survey data from 1998–2024 is available for subscribers in Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends. Benchmark makes data-driven planning and advocacy easy for academic libraries by providing libraries with data visualizations that allow them to compare their inputs and outputs to peer and nationwide data. Learn more at <https://www.ala.org/acrl/benchmark-library-metrics-and-trends>.

KSU Launches Open Publishing Exchange

Kansas State University (KSU) Libraries has renamed its Center for Scholarly Publishing to the Open Publishing Exchange (OPE), reflecting an expanded mission to support open, affordable, and sustainable ways for researchers to share their work. The new name reflects how the department's role has grown in response to changes in research funding, publishing costs, and federal public-access requirements. OPE supports the publication of journal articles, research data, and other scholarly outputs, recognizing them as connected parts of the research process rather than separate activities. The department works with faculty early in the research and grant-planning process to address data management, publishing options, and public-access requirements from the start. This early support can strengthen grant proposals, reduce costs and compliance challenges, and ensure research output can be shared openly and affordably once projects are complete. OPE also helps the university meet federal public-access requirements, including those outlined in the 2022 Office of Science and Technology Policy Public Access Memo, also known as the Nelson Memo.

ACRL Sets 2026–27 Legislative Agenda

Each year, the ACRL Government Relations Committee, in consultation with the ACRL Board of Directors and staff, formulates an ACRL Legislative Agenda. Drafted with input from key ACRL committees, ACRL leaders, and the ALA Public Policy and Advocacy Office, the ACRL Legislative Agenda is prioritized and focuses on issues at the national level affecting the welfare of academic and research libraries. The 2026–27 ACRL Legislative Agenda focuses on four issues that will be the focus of ACRL's advocacy efforts, listed in priority order: Impacts to Higher

Tech Bits . . .

Brought to you by the ACRL ULS Technology in University Libraries Committee

Although generative AI tools often focus on conversation, Perplexity AI functions as a “discovery engine” that bridges the gap between traditional search and AI. It answers queries by scanning the live web and providing a synthesized response accompanied by immediate, numbered citations. Perplexity addresses the AI “black box” by linking every claim to a source, making it a powerful tool for fact checking and source verification. It is highly effective at the reference desk for providing quick topic overviews with a clear trail for deeper research. Additionally, its “Pro Search” mode mimics the reference interview by asking clarifying questions, making it an excellent instructional tool for teaching students how to evaluate AI-generated content against original sources. There are both free and paid versions available.

Roger Zender, Case Western Reserve University

Perplexity AI
<https://perplexity.ai>

Education; Public Access to Reliable Governmental Data; Elimination and Reorganization of Federal Agencies and Departments; and Safety, Security, and Ethical Concerns of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The agenda also includes a watch list of policy issues of great concern to academic librarians. Issues on the watch list are: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA), Consumer Data Privacy, Affordable College Textbook Act, Accessible Instructional Materials, and Net Neutrality. The full 2026–27 Legislative Agenda is available on the ACRL website at <https://www.ala.org/acrl/issues/washingtonwatch#agenda>.

ARL, CNI Release Report on Strategic Implications of AI Futures for Research Libraries

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the research and information environment in consequential ways. To help research library leaders think strategically about those changes, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) have released the report from their Strategic Implications Workshop “Futurescape Libraries: Mapping Possibilities for Tomorrow’s Information Hubs.” The report is designed to support leaders as they consider how advances in AI may affect the roles, responsibilities, and future direction of research libraries. Four near-term priorities emerged from the workshop with particular urgency for library leaders, including invest in workforce now, leverage unique collections, lead on governance and ethics, and build and deepen partnerships. Since the workshop convened in December 2024, the most consequential shift has been the move from AI as a tool researchers use to AI as an agent that acts on their behalf. That shift makes governance, authorization, and quality control operational requirements, not future considerations. *Strategic Implications of AI Futures for Research Libraries: Workshop Report* by Karen Estlund and Cynthia Hudson Vitale is available at <https://doi.org/10.29242/report.futurescape2026>.