

College & Research Libraries

*news*

Association of College & Research Libraries



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This month's cover features a photograph of the Shakespearean literary society's 1909 basketball team at the Iowa State Teachers College (now the University of Northern Iowa). The society was formed in 1892 and helped members with rhetoric and writing skills, alongside providing social event opportunities.

This image is part of the University of Northern Iowa's University Archives collections. A sample of University Archives photographs can be found in the University Archives digital collection at <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/uniphotos/>.

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## AI Competencies for Academic Library Workers Draft Review

The ACRL AI Competencies for Library Workers Task Force invites your feedback on a draft of proposed “[AI Competencies for Academic Library Workers](#)” (PDF). The working group is following ACRL procedures for updates and open comment period laid out by the ACRL Standards committee, [found on the ACRL website](#). Please use the [feedback form](#) to share your comments and suggestions by March 26, 2025. Further discussion will be held at the ACRL 2025 conference during the presentation “AI Competencies for Library Workers: Shaping the Future of Academic Libraries,” to be held from 10:30-11:30am Central on April 3, 2025. After the close of this review period, the task force will review and incorporate feedback, before sharing with the ACRL Standards Committee and the ACRL Board of Directors. Contact Task Force Co-Chairs Jason Matthew Coleman (coleman@ksu.edu) and Keven Michael Jeffery (kjeffery@sdsu.edu) with questions.

## ARL Intensive Learning Program Fellows Selected for 2025 Cohort

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Intensive Learning Program (ILP) Task Force has chosen 20 fellows for the 2025 ILP cohort based on recommendations from the ILP Selection Working Group. The ILP is an eight-month hybrid experience that explores operational aspects of senior-leader portfolios in research libraries and archives as well as responsibilities related to managing those portfolios. ILP Fellows engage in a variety of experiences during the program, including attending the Learning Summit and ARL Association Meeting, participating in an ARL library site visit, joining monthly educational sessions, and completing self-assessments and career-coaching sessions. For more information about the program and the 2025 ILP Fellows, visit the ILP website at <https://www.arl.org/category/our-priorities/learning-at-arl/intensive-learning-program/>.

## Four Libraries Expand GPO Preservation Steward Agreements

Libraries at the University of Minnesota, the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, the University of Kentucky, and the University of South Carolina have expanded upon their Preservation Steward collections with the US Government Publishing Office (GPO). To help libraries meet the needs of efficient government document stewardship in the digital era, GPO has established Preservation Stewards to support continued public access to US government documents in print format. These libraries contribute significantly to the effort to preserve printed documents. Through the agreement, many libraries also serve as digital access partners providing digital access to government information.

## Direct to Open Reaches 2025 Funding Goal, Opens Access to 80 New Monographs

The MIT Press is pleased to announce that Direct to Open (D2O) has reached its full funding goal for 2025 and will open access to 80 new monographs and edited book collections in the spring and fall publishing seasons. Among the highlights from the MIT Press’s fourth D2O funding cycle is a new three-year, consortium-wide commitment from the Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) and a renewed three-year commitment from the Big Ten

Academic Alliance (BTAA). These long-term partnerships will play a pivotal role in supporting the Press's open access efforts for years to come.

Launched in 2021, D2O is an innovative sustainable framework for open access monographs that shifts publishing from a solely market-based, purchase model where individuals and libraries buy single ebooks to a collaborative, library-supported open access model. Many other models offer open access opportunities on a title-by-title basis or within specific disciplines. D2O's advantage is that it enables a press to provide open access to its entire list of scholarly books at scale, embargo-free, during each funding cycle. Thanks to D2O, all MIT Press monograph authors have the opportunity for their work to be published open access with equal support to traditionally underserved and underfunded disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Learn more at <https://direct.mit.edu/books/pages/direct-to-open>.

## Project MUSE Launches New OA Journals

Project MUSE has announced that two new fully open access journals in cultural studies and transcendentalism have joined the hosting program and are now live on the platform. A biannual publication of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, *The Dial* publishes essays, reviews, review essays, and creative works on Emerson and transcendentalism, plus the cultures of nineteenth-century America and beyond that shaped and were shaped by both. *Nuevos Horizontes* is sponsored by the Mellon Foundation and dedicated to disseminating critical texts in the humanities and cultural studies.

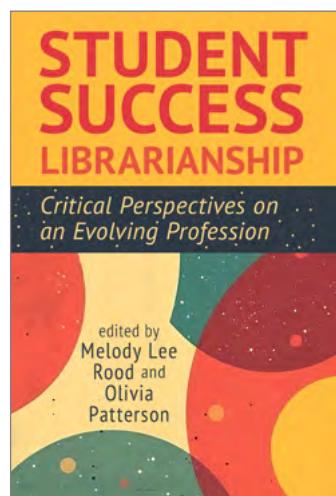
Additionally, back issues of *Getty Research Journal* have now flipped to open access. The journal published its first open access issue in spring 2024, and now numbers 1–18, which launched on Project MUSE in early 2024 but were accessible only to former subscribers, are now also fully open access. This journal presents peer-reviewed articles on the visual arts of all cultures, regions, and time periods. Learn more about Project MUSE at <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.

## New from ACRL—Student Success Librarianship: Critical Perspectives on an Evolving Profession

ACRL announces the publication of *Student Success Librarianship: Critical Perspectives on an Evolving Profession*, edited by Melody Lee Rood and Olivia Patterson. The book examines this emerging position through a critical lens and provides insight and advice to help the profession work toward a positive evolution of this important role.

Student success librarian positions, while increasingly common in academic libraries, are still so new to the field that many librarians with this title are the first person in the position and their roles are ambiguous and difficult to define. They often include quantifiable metrics such as retention rates, academic persistence, and graduation rates, as well as elements like student well-being, belonging, and a sense of purpose. This broad scope has intensified already challenging and emotionally taxing work.

In three sections—Theory, Praxis, and Research—*Student Success Librarianship* explores how to articulate, set boundaries for, and bring our humanity to the role; address student



mental health and provide multilingual resources and support; and map both the current state of student success and a vision for its future.

Student success librarians can feel alone in both their love for and critiques of their profession and their roles within it. *Student Success Librarianship* can help you celebrate your work, find areas of improvement, and offers validation and inspiration.

*Student Success Librarianship: Critical Perspectives on an Evolving Profession* is available for purchase in print and as an ebook through the ALA Online Store; in print through Amazon.com; and by telephone order at (866) 746-7252 in the US or (770) 442-8633 for international customers.

## **Gale Unveils Digital Archive on Global Impact of The American Civil War**

Gale, part of Cengage Group, is helping faculty and researchers explore and understand the transnational impact of the American Civil War. The company has launched The American Civil War: The International Context, a new digital archive that demonstrates the far-reaching involvement of European nations in the American Civil War, shedding light on their internal discussions, reactions to diplomatic overtures from both Union and Confederate forces, and the war's impact on international politics and society. This first-of-its-kind collection gives researchers and students an unprecedented look into the global ramifications of one of America's most pivotal conflicts, enabling scholars to analyze the war from a variety of international perspectives and its influence on political history worldwide. Learn more at <https://www.gale.com/c/american-civil-war-the-international-context>.

## **Springer Nature Launches New AI Tool**

Springer Nature has launched a new artificial intelligence (AI)-driven tool to help editors and peer reviewers by automating several editorial quality checks and alerting editors to potentially unsuitable manuscripts so that they can be held back from peer review. Developed in-house, this is the latest AI tool planned for integration into Springer Nature's next generation article submission and processing platform, Snapp, following the inclusion in 2024 of two AI tools to identify fake content. Working in collaboration with researchers and designed to seamlessly integrate with Snapp, it is currently being tested and verified on more than 100 open access (OA) journals, including *Scientific Reports*, the largest OA journal in the world, and across more than 100,000 submissions.

The AI tool supports editors and peer reviewers by quickly addressing manuscript quality issues, reducing the number of amendments needed, and maintaining the integrity of a high-quality publishing process. In each instance, a human expert double-checks the results before a final decision is made. It marks the next phase of the publisher's investment in emerging technologies to enhance the publishing experience for researchers, editors, and reviewers, all of which are developed in line with its AI principles. Learn more at <https://group.springernature.com/gp/group/ai>.

## **OverDrive, Ex Libris Launch New Integration for Alma and Primo**

OverDrive has announced a new integration with Ex Libris, a ProQuest company, allowing academic institutions to seamlessly discover OverDrive ebooks and audiobooks within the Alma and Primo library services platforms. This integration, highly requested by academic

institutions, simplifies access to OverDrive's extensive collection of digital content, offering a powerful solution to enhance discovery for students, faculty, and researchers. This integration enhances access to digital content for students and faculty, helping academic institutions seamlessly incorporate OverDrive's digital resources into their library services. While the integration currently supports ebooks and audiobooks, plans for expanded content offerings, such as films and television shows via Kanopy and magazines, are being explored for the future.

## Clarivate Reveals Highly Cited Researchers 2024 List

Clarivate has revealed its 2024 list of Highly Cited Researchers—*influential researchers at universities, research institutes, and commercial organizations around the world who have demonstrated significant and broad influence in their field(s) of research*. Analysts at the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) have recognized 6,636 Highly Cited Researchers in 2024 from more than 1,200 institutions in 59 nations and regions. The rigorous evaluation and selection process draws on data from the Web of Science Core Collection citation index together with qualitative analysis performed by experts at the ISI at Clarivate.

The list provides valuable insights into the global landscape of top research talent and identifies trends across countries, regions, and institutions. Mainland China and Hong Kong SAR made sizeable gains, while the United States gradually lost share. This trend reflects a geographic, political, and cultural rebalancing of top-tier scientific and scholarly contributions. Learn more at <https://clarivate.com/highly-cited-researchers/>. 

## Tech Bits ...

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Samantha LeGrand

# Making Room

## Integrating Student as Partners Pedagogy into the Framework

The Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education offers information literacy (IL) instructors structure to develop pedagogy, aiming to enhance student engagement in knowledge production and communal learning.<sup>1</sup> However, it remains instructor-centered, overlooking students' strengths and goals. In contrast, the Students as Partners (SaP) approach fosters shared respect, responsibility, and reciprocity as instructors and students co-create educational experiences.<sup>2</sup> SaP involves students earlier in pedagogical decision-making processes, reframing education as a relational, personally meaningful pursuit. SaP gives students greater agency as they learn how to learn as well as positively impact peers and instructors through academic work.

SaP pedagogy aligns with the Framework's original intent to empower students, and it more fully enacts the participatory principles necessary to achieve that goal. We can integrate SaP pedagogy into the Framework in two fundamental ways: (1) integrating relationally centered, asset-based language, leveraging unique experiences and dialogue; and (2) incorporating culturally relevant, transformative actions into the frames. Librarians collaborate with campus-wide stakeholders and are routinely positioned as both "experts" and "novice learners," depending on who we work with.<sup>3</sup> Thus, librarians are situated to lead partnership-oriented educational reform in our uniquely varied pedagogical relationships. This article presents a theoretical framework exploring intersections in existing literature on the Framework and SaP pedagogy to offer insights into the possibilities of their combined application for enhancing IL teaching and learning outcomes.

### Students as Partners Pedagogy

SaP pedagogy emphasizes shared and equitable outcomes between instructors and students as they co-create educational experiences. This reimagines traditional teaching, where instructors make decisions about the learning process before any interaction with students. SaP, conversely, necessitates interaction as asset-based and culturally relevant pedagogy. SaP frames education as a relationship and a mechanism for personal *and* communal impact.

Scholarship on SaP pedagogy shows positive outcomes from student-instructor partnerships.<sup>4</sup> Partnerships develop authentic motivation and engagement as partners clarify their motivations and redefine classroom responsibilities. Transparent communication helps partners understand themselves and each other better. SaP scholarship emphasizes shared outcomes, documenting students' transformation into active learners and instructors into reflective practitioners.<sup>5</sup>

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Partnership has been defined as a “reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualization, decision-making, implementation, investigation, or analysis.”<sup>6</sup> Incorporating SaP pedagogy into the Framework moves beyond one-way teaching and oversimplifying complex IL concepts.<sup>7</sup> Instead, student partnership facilitates dialogue about *why IL matters*, creates change, and democratizes decisions. Instructors can ask what knowledge practices students have honed that we, as experts, missed when creating the Framework. Co-developing IL with students should lead to transformative actions, applying collaboratively determined knowledge practices and dispositions to achieve beneficial outcomes for students, instructors, and communities.<sup>8</sup>

## **Student Agency in the Design of the Framework**

The Framework updated IL teaching standards, shifting from skills-based to a theoretical approach, reenvisioning IL pedagogy as broader educational reform.<sup>9</sup> This less prescriptive conceptual scaffolding encourages student agency and collaboration, aligning with SaP pedagogy.<sup>10</sup> The Framework aims to develop students as “consumers and creators of information,” focusing on metacognition and self-direction.<sup>11</sup>

The IL community has both embraced and critiqued the Framework.<sup>12</sup> It has successfully guided IL instructors to engage students in complex IL concepts, such as discussions about the contextual nature of authority.<sup>13</sup> Its updated definition of IL offers opportunity for pedagogical student partnership, “emphasizing dynamism, flexibility, individual growth, and community learning” through reflective practice, critique of information processes, and ethical knowledge creation.<sup>14</sup> The introduction even suggests involving students in pedagogical research but is the only explicit mention of instructor-student collaboration. Fully integrating SaP pedagogy could meaningfully engage students in collaborative IL development.

SaP complements the educational theory behind the Framework, and pedagogical partnership is needed to truly realize “information literacy as educational reform.”<sup>15</sup> Moreover, while metaliteracy and student agency focus on individual growth, SaP is inherently collective and relational, enabling the Framework’s communal learning goal. SaP necessitates an asset-based, culturally relevant pedagogy. Because students take decision-making positions about curriculum and class policy—why, how, and what they learn—they bring more of themselves into learning processes.

## **Problematizing Student Agency in the Framework**

Despite promoting student agency, the Framework relies on instructor-centered, deficit-based approaches. Traditional teaching prioritizes instructor expertise in determining learning outcomes, excluding students from educational decision-making. This can lead to misalignment between courses and students’ experiences, values, or goals. Paolo Freire critiqued this “banking model” where instructors hold authority and students passively receive knowledge. For truly empowering education, both parties should cultivate “critical consciousness”—awareness of injustice and, importantly, acting to address it.<sup>16</sup> For the Framework to meaningfully empower students, we must first problematize some of its foundational premises, which suffer banking model pitfalls.

The frames employ an “experts vs. novice learners” comparison, suggesting experts have all necessary knowledge for successful interactions with information, whereas “novices” lack

knowledge, not recognized as offering anything in dialogue with expert instructors. Knowledge practices and dispositions instruct “learners who are developing their information literate abilities,” suggesting experts’ practices are fully developed with nothing further to learn. Instead, IL’s development could be described in terms of lifelong learning and instructors encouraged to model their own ongoing learning.

The frame Authority is Constructed and Contextual (ACC) exemplifies deficit-based language about (lack of) student knowledge: “**Experts know how** to seek authoritative voices but also recognize that unlikely voices can be authoritative, depending on need. **Novice learners may need to rely on** basic indicators of authority, such as type of publication or author credentials, **where experts recognize** schools of thought or discipline-specific paradigms”<sup>17</sup> (emphasis added). This overlooks “novice” prior knowledge, motivations shaping their understanding of authority’s contextuality, or culturally specific contexts where “novices” might have greater expertise than instructors.

Michael Dudley’s interpretation of the ACC frame moves toward pedagogical partnership.<sup>18</sup> In this application, the instructor explains the problematic Eurocentric and heteronormative nature of Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), contrasts them with justice-oriented Alternative Press Index (API) headings, and demonstrates heading bias while searching for student-suggested topics. Indeed, involving students in constructing searches brings them closer to classroom decision-making. However, integrating SaP pedagogy into the ACC frame could deepen students’ ownership of the learning experience.

For example, rather than situating students as IL novices by explaining biased headings to them, students could contrast LCSH and API headings themselves, discussing the significance of their findings. To implement transformative action, students could propose updates to headings for a personally significant topic, taking an authoritative position to better represent the knowledge and the community who created it. To even further embrace partnership, instead of an academic library focus, students could identify where representative knowledge organization is important to them, investigating how they might create change in that context. Perhaps they would choose to interrogate biased algorithms suppressing content from creators of color<sup>19</sup> or university policies hindering transgender students from using chosen names.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the instructor-focused approach permeating the core content—the frames themselves—it is also evident in the Framework’s supplementary sections. They illuminate assumptions underpinning the Framework’s adherence to traditional student–instructor dynamics. The introduction and appendixes contextualize the Framework’s creation and provide guidance on implementation. These materials target traditional pedagogical decision makers: IL instructors, faculty, and administrators. Students were not involved in the Framework’s creation, nor included with campus stakeholders IL practitioners are urged to collaborate with, which starkly illustrates a problematic dichotomy: the Framework’s stated goal is increased student agency, but it perpetuates instructor-centered practices and deficit-based view of students.

For example, the introduction describes instructor-centered educational theory underpinning the Framework, looking to “an ongoing Delphi Study that has identified several threshold concepts in information literacy.”<sup>21</sup> By definition, a Delphi study solely represents subject-matter-experts’ perspectives, missing valuable contributions of students’ lived experiences. Threshold concepts communicate a discipline’s values and peculiarities

from experts' consensus. But Ian Beilin explains, "While threshold concepts may have an important place in the process of learning, information literacy must demand that the concepts themselves be questioned as part of the critique of the structure of knowledge."<sup>22</sup> There are distinct experiences on both sides of a threshold—crossing over, so to speak, changes your thinking, and it is difficult to recall how you thought on the other side. Therefore, we should question why students—key stakeholders in education—have not helped define "information literate" practices, documenting the threshold-crossing experience of learning them. Rather, threshold concepts may reinforce that students must "learn the rules" of disciplinary knowledge, individualistically focusing on mastering the existing system.<sup>23</sup> Conversely, Healy et al.<sup>24</sup> suggest pedagogical partnership requires being "(radically) open to and creating possibilities for discovering and learning something that cannot be known beforehand."

## Integrating SaP into the Framework

We can address the Framework's deficit-based, instructor-centered approaches by integrating SaP pedagogy in two ways: (1) adopting relationally centered language, guiding students *and* instructors to learn and teach reciprocally; and (2) attending to the behavioral domain of learning, not just delivering content, but determining IL's significance for shaping future actions. Co-developing IL alongside students should lead to transformative actions that apply knowledge practices and dispositions beyond the classroom, benefiting students and communities. SaP pedagogy suggests two strategies: leveraging what students are *already doing* and acting upon what they would *choose to do* as they learn more. Guiding questions can support exploration of these strategies:

- What are students *already doing* with knowledge practices and dispositions? How can we incorporate explicit identification of student prior knowledge and cultural assets into the Framework?
- What would students *choose to do* with knowledge practices and dispositions? What outcomes would make IL valuable to students? What projects, skills, or experiences would they pursue with their growing information literacy?

## Relationally Centered Language

Being "instructor-centered" or "student-centered" are not the only choices—education is not a zero-sum game. Relationship is at the core of education, and empowering students does not disempower instructors. Rather, both are empowered through embracing their unique and necessary roles in partnership.<sup>25</sup> Integrating relationally centered language into the Framework could move us toward a partnership approach where students and instructors leverage their unique assets to learn from and teach one another. Asset-based Framework language should be crafted in and for dialogue with students. SaP's structure of shared respect, responsibility, and reciprocity can guide these discussions within each frame.<sup>26</sup>

- **Respect:** learners can be reframed as equal partners by identifying their valuable (though distinct) strengths and contributions in dialogue about the frame's concepts.
- **Reciprocity:** instructors can be reframed as co-learners by sharing what they don't know and modeling continuous learning.
- **Responsibility:** students and instructors can collaboratively decide on meaningful outcomes and demonstrations of learning.

## Transformative Behaviors in IL Pedagogy

After integrating partnership-oriented language, SaP pedagogy enables transformative action by revisiting the knowledge practices and dispositions in conversation with students. The Framework addresses cognitive “knowledge practices” and affective “dispositions.”<sup>27</sup> The behavioral, action-oriented domain can be better leveraged for culturally relevant IL. What next steps will students take to enact meaningful change as they learn IL practices and mindsets? Learning can be collaboratively constructed to identify culturally relevant, asset-based actions informed by their developing IL.<sup>28</sup>

To do this, each frame could include a third category—“transformative actions”—empowered by IL knowledge practices and dispositions. These experiential, participatory actions transform learners through their engagement with information and, in turn, learners transform the world around them.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, this could answer previous calls to integrate social justice and critical information literacy into the Framework.<sup>30</sup> Following its original intent to provide theoretical guidance, not prescriptive mandates, these transformative actions could be framed as general practices. The author suggests the following examples of partnership-oriented language each frame could include:

Learning communities of instructor and student partners collaboratively developing information literate practices might

- make shared decisions informed by...
- facilitate dialogue between...
- engage in peer teaching by sharing experience in...
- propose a change/solution to...
- engage with a community by learning about...
- collaborate to create a product that meets the needs of...

## Conclusion

The Framework continues to powerfully influence IL pedagogy. To realize the Framework’s goals of student agency, embracing SaP pedagogy is necessary. Pedagogical partnership will enable librarians to enact another of the Framework’s core goals, realizing IL “as an educational reform movement.”<sup>31</sup> Librarians are positioned to lead broader partnership-oriented educational reform through our uniquely varied campus relationships.<sup>32</sup> As a profession, we can begin this transformation by adjusting the Framework’s expectations for students and instructors in IL pedagogy and practices. **xx**

## Notes

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2. Alison Cook-Sather, Catherine Bovill, and Peter Felten, *Engaging Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching: A Guide for Faculty*, the Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (Jossey-Bass, 2014).
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5. Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten, *Engaging Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching*; Mick Healey, Abbi Flint, and Kathy Harrington, *Engagement through Partnership: Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (Higher Education Academy, January 7, 2014).

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7. Veronica Arellano Douglas and Joanna Gadsby, "The Power of Presence: One-Shots, Relational Teaching, and Instruction Librarianship," *College & Research Libraries* 83, no. 2 (September 2022), <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.83.5.807>.

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14. "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education."

15. "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education."

16. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

17. "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education."

18. Dudley, "Exploring Worldviews and Authorities."

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Amanda Clay Powers and Dustin Fife

# Psychological Safety in Libraries

It's a Team Sport

**A**cademic Library Workers in Conversation is a *C&RL News* series focused on elevating the everyday conversations of library professionals. The wisdom of the watercooler has long been heralded, but this series hopes to go further by minimizing barriers to traditional publishing with an accessible format. Each of the topics in the series were proposed by the authors and they were given space to explore. This issue's conversation is about psychological safety in academic libraries. The discussion affirms that psychological safety and culture change are a group effort, even if some team members have a disproportionate influence.—*Dustin Fife, series editor*

**Dustin Fife:** Amanda, there is a question I love to ask at work. I ask it in meetings, during one-on-ones, as part of committees, and just about everywhere else I go. That question is: What do WE control in this situation? I find this to be an empowering practice, and I want to apply it to a topic that I know you and I both appreciate. We have discussed psychological safety many times. We have regularly considered our own experiences on the topic, and especially our failures. However, I want to get specific with you bearing in mind the question above. As supervisors, as deans, associate deans, and directors of libraries, as colleagues and peers, as members of communities, what do we control in regard to psychological safety for ourselves and others?

Also, I readily admit that “control” might be the wrong word and influence is probably better.

**Amanda Clay Powers:** That's a great question. I've come to understand that while psychological safety is essential for teams to grow and thrive, it's a collective effort. No one can legislate safe teams from the top. What's important is for leaders to give teams the opportunity to learn what a psychologically safe team would look like and then give them tools and encouragement to make that happen. Part of this is the hard work of making diverse teams safe. For me, that has meant all library retreats around microaggressions, anti-racism, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, accessibility in libraries, and intersectional identities. We've been programming around what we've learned, leaning into service, and making safe places for our students and community. We did this work for ourselves and our relationships with each other, but also for our patrons and our relationships with them. This discussion is not about that work, but I wanted to start with a caveat that these must go hand in hand.

Each person in a library only has control over their own work. But, if we are lucky, we can collectively create an environment where it is safe to try new things, fail, and try again.

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Trust is essential to make this work, but trust takes time to build, and leaders can facilitate this through transparency and open communication. In fact, these traits can be modeled by leaders at all levels. I know it can be difficult to be transparent as a leader. It creates a vulnerability that is both essential and scary at the same time. I've been working on this, more or less successfully, since I read the 2016 *New York Times Magazine*<sup>1</sup> article about Google's use of Amy Edmondson's<sup>2</sup> work on psychological safety. I've found that being transparent about budgets, decision making, and any gleaned information about campus has helped. We have also invested heavily in wellness since 2020, emphasizing mental and physical health and family as first priorities. I think this combination has helped move the needle in creating a safe place to work. Regarding influence, though, I do think that's the right word. We are all influencing each other with what we bring to the table at work.

Dustin, where do you start when it comes to psychological safety?

**Dustin:** Well, I think I must start with "me," as I am sure that you start with "you." I must start with the way that I treat and trust people. I must start with my attitudes and actions. You demonstrate beautifully above that psychological safety is a team sport, that it must go hand-in-hand with antiracist ambitions, and that we often only control our own work. I agree with that—though I still shudder at the word "control"—and want to emphasize that we can be especially intentional about how we do that work in relation to others.

I also can't stop thinking about the concept of the "benefit of the doubt," or as it is articulated in the incredible parenting book *Good Inside*<sup>3</sup> by Becky Kennedy, the "MGI" or "most generous interpretation." I would recommend this book to anyone, as I have done a great deal of healing and personal reparenting while studying it. Kennedy implores people to interpret the actions of their family members through the most generous lens possible. I have been thinking about this for months and have concluded that I have never worked with a single "bad" colleague. I have never worked with a colleague who was intentionally trying to hurt an organization or others. I have worked with cantankerous colleagues, unprepared peers, overextended professionals, and folks doing unintentional harm (though harm all the same), but not "bad" people. And this is not to say that there are not people doing poor work in libraries, but it changes how I believe we should think about other library professionals. But for now, I am secure in saying that psychological safety starts with me. However, it certainly does not and cannot end with me.

Amanda, what else have you learned from your experiences so far, especially in regard to culture change?

**Amanda:** I have thought a lot about culture change in relation to academic libraries. It's been a central part of the work I've done over the last twenty years, and understanding psychological safety gave me the traction to move forward in my libraries. I used *The First 90 Days*<sup>4</sup> as a guidebook in my first job as a dean, but I quickly threw it out. I'd been hired to integrate technology into a "traditional library," but I found a library that had sailed away from the university. Communication was nonexistent and trust was seemingly an impossible goal. I love creative conflict and pushback on my ideas, but without trust that is impossible. I fell back on my experience with psychological safety as a place to get started, and since then I've realized it is always the right place to start. Trust is hard-won, and culture change is impossible without it.

The first thing I do now is sit still and be curious. Once my colleagues understand that I'm not trying to impose a structure, but rather understand the current environment, that

works to move the needle on trust. Practicing that vulnerability and transparency I mentioned continues to foster confidence throughout the library, but it is in developing a genuine interest in understanding the “whys” and the history that allows trust to grow. People need to be heard, and that is one of the central tenets of practicing psychological safety in teams. Everyone gets heard. No one gets shamed. From that fundamental place, the real work of building fearless teams can begin.

Dustin, what are some of the stumbling blocks you have seen for teams trying to become psychologically safe?

**Dustin:** First, I need a daily text from you reminding me to sit still and be curious. I believe this prescription could cure much of what ails our library cultures. Along with the understanding that psychological safety is a team effort. If people are not “bad” people, it should encourage us to begin with curiosity rather than criticism. There will be an opportunity to criticize, there are always opportunities to criticize, and criticism is an essential tool. But start with curiosity. I also believe that curiosity can mitigate one of the main stumbling blocks of culture change. Curiosity can help us abandon the notion that there is a single right way to do most things. How we do things is rarely as important as why we do things together and curiosity will bolster that connectivity.

Amanda, the communal nature of any goal related to culture change or psychological safety is its greatest stumbling block in my experience. Everyone contributes to culture, and too often I see no one taking responsibility for culture, which means that inertia and the status quo will continue to dominate. So, I want to come back to our original question. I believe that every member of the organization must begin to take ownership for culture and ask themselves what they control in their libraries. What they influence on their teams. Ask themselves if they create or remove barriers.

One final admonition from me, though. I want to emphasize that people in leadership roles, and at times others who have amassed influence, need to recognize that they can disproportionately influence psychological safety, even if they cannot change culture on their own. I know we often hope that new leaders will bring new culture, but from my experience, leaders on their own change nothing for the better. However, they can easily make things worse. It is hard to make things systematically better, it is not hard to make things worse. So, be trustworthy to build trust. Be transparent to build transparency. Be inclusive to build inclusion. Be generous and curious to build generosity and curiosity. And then repeat because building psychologically safe teams is a process that never ends.

Amanda, I know there is so much more that we could and should say, but I just want to give you the last word here.

**Amanda:** I also want to emphasize that this is not meant to be a one-and-done solution. The hard work of building safe places is worth it, but it is just that, hard. The people who’ve worked with me hear me say over and over: “Point your feet in a direction, and you will end up there.” This is an opportunity to point your feet in the direction of a fearless organization that embraces failure, encourages curious explorations, offers clarity and transparency around decision-making, supports experimentation, rewards the attempt as well as the win, and breaks down outdated and calcified silos. The potential benefit is huge, and so is the investment. I’ve found that centering DEI work and wellness works best in moving an organization toward fearlessness. Acknowledging and addressing microaggressions in the workplace in an inclusive manner, as well as the real mental health and physical challenges

ever present in any organization, is essential. It is a whole-person philosophy founded in empathetic leadership.

My advice to library leaders considering this path is to start with *The Fearless Organization*. Edmondson has distilled research she's done across organizations into a text for encouraging "learning, innovation, and growth." I've also used *StrengthsFinder 2.0* on my teams to help us understand each other's strengths and find more effective ways to communicate—an essential part of psychological safety. And I know you, Dustin, love to recommend *Lifelong Kindergarten*<sup>5</sup> by Mitchel Resnick.

In closing, psychologically safe teams can happen in discrete parts of a library, but as a leader my goal is to build an organization that is headed in a fearless direction. **»**

## Notes

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2. A. Edmondson, *The Fearless Organization* (Wiley Press, 2019).
3. B. Kennedy, *Good Inside: A Practical Guide to Resilient Parenting Prioritizing Connection over Correction* (HarperCollins, 2022).
4. M. D. Watkins, *The First 90 Days: Proven Strategies for Getting Up to Speed Faster and Smarter* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2013).
5. M. Resnick, *Lifelong Kindergarten: Cultivating Creativity through Projects, Passion, Peers, and Play* (MIT Press, 2017).

Angie Ohler and Evangelia Q. Oates

# Minneapolis Food Guide

Where to Eat in the Twin Cities

While attending the ACRL 2025 Conference in the Twin Cities, you'll have the opportunity to explore a diverse and vibrant culinary scene. There is no shortage of good places to dine in Minneapolis. In this article we share some of the restaurants we have most enjoyed during our time here. This list is by no means exhaustive and is merely a representation of our experiences. Here are some iconic local dishes and notable establishments to consider.

## Juicy (or Jucy) Lucy

A Minneapolis staple, the Juicy (Jucy) Lucy is a cheese-stuffed burger that oozes molten cheese with every bite. Try this delicacy at these two spots:

**Matt's Bar and Grill** (\$-\$\$): Now a Minneapolis landmark, it began in 1954 as a neighborhood burger eatery. *Distance from the convention center: 3.6 miles, 13-minute drive.*

**Crooked Pint Ale House** (\$-\$\$): Try the Poutine Lucy, stuffed with American cheese, then topped with more American cheese, plus chopped bacon, pub fries, cheese curds, and beef gravy. *Distance from the convention center: 1.1 miles, 6-minute drive.*

## Hmong Cuisine

The Twin Cities boast a significant Hmong community, enriching the local food landscape with unique flavors.

**Diane's Place** (\$-\$\$): A Hmong American full-service restaurant serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Located in Northeast Minneapolis, Dianne's Place brings together Chef Diane's incredible talents in pastry and the comfort recipes of her Hmong heritage in an exceptional culinary experience. *Distance from the convention center: 4.5 miles, 9-minute drive.*

**Vinai** (\$\$-\$ \$\$): A new restaurant by renowned Union Hmong Kitchen Chef Yia Vang. Hmong food draws on the flavors of the Southeast Asian countries that the nomadic Hmong people traveled through. The menu at Vinai (pronounced VEE-nye) features modern interpretations of the Hmong family dishes Yia grew up eating including large, shared mains, bright veggie sides, and bold sauces. *Distance from the convention center: 2.9 miles, 11-minute drive.*

## Native American Fare

Experience Indigenous cuisine that pays homage to the region's original inhabitants.

**Owamni** (\$\$\$): In Sean Sherman's modern Indigenous kitchen, every dish is made without

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wheat flour, dairy, cane sugar, black pepper, or any other ingredient introduced to the continent after Europeans arrived. *Distance from the convention center: 1.2 miles, 7-minute drive.*

## Local Favorites

### Americana

[Red Cow Uptown](#) (\$\$) celebrates finely crafted eats and drinks with a focus on gourmet burgers, craft beers, and fine wine. Red Cow is a cozy, brick-walled brewpub and restaurant with house and guest taps, patio seating, and eclectic bar bites. Great gluten free options are available. *Distance from the convention center: 2.1 miles, 7-minute drive.*

[Hell's Kitchen](#) (\$\$) is an independent, employee-owned restaurant that's been making award-winning scratch food in the heart of downtown Minneapolis for more than 22 years. It has gluten-free options. *Distance from the convention center: half mile, 10 min walk.*

### Pizza

[Young Joni](#) (\$\$) is James Beard award-winning chef Ann Kim's restaurant located in Northeast Minneapolis. The menu is inspired by wood fire cooking and features a diverse array of globally influenced dishes and signature pizzas. Tucked discreetly behind the restaurant is the back bar, serving craft cocktails, pizzas, and analog vibes in a warm setting. Take a walk down the alley alongside Young Joni and look for the red light. When the light is on, the back bar is open. *Distance from convention center: 4.5 miles, 9-minute drive.*



Basque and Korean BBQ pizzas from Young Joni. © @1105\_jp, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

[Pizza Luce](#) (\$\$) is known for their innovative and award-winning pizzas, and they also serve a wide variety of hoagies, salads, appetizers, and desserts. They offer something for everyone and have vegan and vegetarian options as well as a gluten-free version of the menu. *Distance from convention center: 1.3 miles, 6-minute drive.*

### Italian

[Red Rabbit](#) (\$\$-\$\$\$\$): Pizzas are prepared with a thin and crispy crust and pastas include lasagna, spaghetti and meatballs, tortelloni, and shrimp gorganelli. A good range of delicious starters are great for sharing with friends. Gluten-free options are available. *Distance from convention center: 1.7 miles, 10-minute drive.*



Churrasco steak entrée at Chimborazo. © @1105\_jp, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

### Ecuadorian

[Chimborazo](#) (\$\$) is a small spot serving Ecuadorian and Andean foods with beer

and wine amid traditional decor with textiles. *Distance from convention center: 3.9 miles, 15-minute drive.*

## North African, Middle Eastern

[Cardamom](#) (\$\$-\$\$\$\$) is a casual restaurant offering heaps of vegetables, herbs, and spices. Located at the Walker Art Center, you can wander the galleries, watch a film, or enjoy a performance and then enjoy brunch, lunch, or dinner. *Distance from convention center: 1.2 miles, 5-minute drive, 20-minute walk.*

## Allergy Friendly

The Twin Cities have fantastic options for those with food allergies. Here are some of the best choices with a variety of menu options to accommodate most dietary restrictions.

[French Meadow Minneapolis](#) (\$\$ gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian): Organic, fresh, and sustainable farm-to-table cuisine in a welcoming environment. French Meadow was the first certified organic bakery in the US. The desserts are made daily, include many gluten-free choices, and go quick! *Distance from convention center: 2 miles, 9-minute drive.*

[Brasa](#) (\$\$ gluten-free, vegan options): Delicious food inspired by the traditional ingredients and flavors of the southern US, Caribbean, and Mexico. Brasa features fresh produce, 100% natural and regionally sourced meats, organic eggs, beans, and fair trade coffee and teas. *Distance from convention center: 1.8 miles, 9-minute drive.*

[Francis](#) (\$\$ vegan, dairy-free, gluten-free) is a vegan's delight. Nor should the herbivores be left out of the Juicy Lucy conversation: this Impossible patty or black bean riff comes with all the fixings and arrives between two brioche buns. Also ideal for anyone with a dairy or lactose intolerance (no dairy at all!) and extremely adaptable and friendly to other allergies and preferences—particularly gluten-free and celiac diners. *Distance from convention center: 1.8 miles, 9-minute drive.*



Brasa's famous pork. © @1105\_jp, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

## Splurge-Worthy Dining

For a special night out, consider these establishments.

[Fhima's Minneapolis](#) (\$\$\$) offers a modern take on French Moroccan cuisine using the highest quality ingredients in partnership with Minnesota and local farmers. One can trust the sommeliers to guide you to the perfect pairing of wines, liquors, and cocktails. *Distance from convention center: 0.8 miles, 4-minute drive.*

[Colita](#) (\$\$\$\$) integrates the incredibly diverse flavors of Mexico with barbecue and smoking techniques from all over the world. Its tapas-style small plates are easy for sharing. Colita's cocktails are unlike anything else in Minneapolis. The kitchen is gluten-free. *Distance from convention center: 6.6 miles, 14-minute drive.*

## Northeast and Near UMTC's West Bank

[Curry Corner](#) (\$-\$\$) is a small, family-owned business located in northeast Minneapolis. The owner is from Mumbai and is serving one of the best Indian and Indian Street food menus in the Twin Cities. Make sure to try the lamb samosa and the mango chutney. *Distance from convention center: 1.7 miles, 8-minute drive.*

[K-Bop Korean Bistro](#) (\$-\$\$) is a sleek, relaxed bistro located in the heart of Dinkytown serving Korean classics, including bulgogi, bibimbap, and tonkatsu. *Distance from the convention center: 3.2 miles, 8-minute drive.*

[The Red Sea Ethiopian Restaurant](#) (\$-\$\$) is located on the West Bank of the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus. The Red Sea is Minneapolis' first Ethiopian restaurant. Since opening in 1990, it has been a destination for authentic Ethiopian and Eritrean food, with a variety of flavorful dishes, including many vegetarian options, along with a wide selection of beer, wine, and cocktails. *Distance from the convention center: 2.2 miles, 6-minute drive.*



Feast from K-Bop Korean Bistro. © @1105\_jp, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

## Local Breweries and Bars

[Town Hall Brewery](#) (\$\$) is a brewery and restaurant featuring world-class beer, fantastic food, and an atmosphere worthy of both. It's a place where you can relax and enjoy yourself. They've been crafting great beer at Seven Corners in Minneapolis since 1997 and have been awarded more medals at the Great American Beer Festival than any other Minnesota brewery. *Distance from the convention center: 2.2 miles, 6-minute drive.*

## Breakfast and Brunch Spots

[Lutunji's Palate](#) (\$-\$\$) is a Black-owned café and bakery known for its peach cobbler, plus sandwiches, soups, and salads. Come on the first Tuesday of the month for open mic. Lutunji's also features a tiny library for local authors. *Distance from convention center: 0.6 miles, 3-minute drive.*

[Berry Sweet Kitchen](#) (\$-\$\$) offers guests a casual, family-friendly dining experience. The cozy neighborhood restaurant boasts a menu full of mouth-watering breakfast and lunch favorites including delectable cakes and other desserts that are made in-house. They also have a full bar. *Distance from convention center: 9 miles, 12-minute drive.*

[Darling Seward](#) (\$-\$\$) is tucked discreetly in a quiet neighborhood near the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. Experience the delightful treats from their breakfast, lunch, and dinner menu. *Distance from the convention center: 3.4 miles, 10-minute drive.* 

Kara Malenfant and Sian Brannon

# 2023 ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey

## Highlights and Key Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Findings

Each year, ACRL's Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey asks academic libraries to report on academic library budgets, staffing, information services, collections, and more in response to 100 questions. This national-level data provides evidence so libraries can demonstrate their impact and value to their users, institutions, and communities. Findings from the 2023 survey continued this tradition while also supplying additional information about a trend, in this case via five questions about the current status of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) efforts.

Past instructions and worksheets, helpful links, historical findings, current survey information, and FAQs can be found on the ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics LibGuide.<sup>1</sup> The Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey Editorial Board thanks the more than 1,400 academic libraries that participated, especially first-time contributors. The response rate was nearly 43%, with the majority of respondents being from masters and doctoral universities.

The highlights and insights below are based on analysis of this data from ACRL's Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends tool ([librarybenchmark.org](https://librarybenchmark.org)) unless otherwise noted. Academic libraries completing the survey have free access to their own survey responses and selected aggregate data. Benchmark subscribers can leverage data outputs to perform institution-specific analysis for benchmarking, self-studies, budgeting, strategic planning, annual reports, and grant applications. Academic libraries' responses to these longitudinal questions can demonstrate consistency, disruption, or, in some cases, a surprising combination of the two.

Of the 100 annual questions ACRL asks, a subset of 24 are required for all academic institutions via the Academic Libraries Survey, a component survey of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).<sup>2</sup> The ACRL Survey instructions and definitions are completely aligned, and libraries completing the survey can easily download their responses to share with their local IPEDS keyholder.

### Standard Survey Questions

In October 2024, ACRL released a comprehensive report with findings from 1,414 US academic libraries' responses to the 2023 survey.<sup>3</sup> Readers may refer to that for detailed analysis and figures. Below are selected snapshots of recent trends over time in expenditures, staffing levels, financial commitments to subscriptions, and services.

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## Expenditures 2020–2023

Expenditures have, on average, slowly climbed above last year, with 2023 total expenditures up 6% over 2022. Spending on materials and services has increased by 5%, operations and maintenance has increased by 11%, and spending on salaries and wages are up by 6% year over year. Although the average overall expenditures have risen, the distribution of where the money is spent remains about the same, as shown in table 1.

**Table 1. Expenditures as Percentage of Spending 2020–2023**

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Materials & services	51%	50%	50%	49%
Operations & maintenance	10%	9%	9%	10%
Salaries & wages (excluding fringe)	39%	41%	41%	41%

## Library Expenditures on Ongoing Commitments to Subscriptions

A specific metric to examine for expenditures is the comparison of how much academic libraries pay for subscriptions as a percentage of their overall expenditures. The percentage of budgets dedicated to ongoing commitments to subscriptions has been fairly consistent over the past four years, as seen in figure 1. The only significant change is in the average percent spent by Baccalaureate institutions, which has recovered from a dip in 2022. As noted last year, this could be an area for investigation, or an anomaly based on errors in reporting.<sup>4</sup> Given inflationary cost increases for subscriptions, this could mean that libraries are not able to purchase as many ongoing resources.

**Average % of Total Expenditures Spent on Ongoing Commitments to Subscriptions 2020–2023**

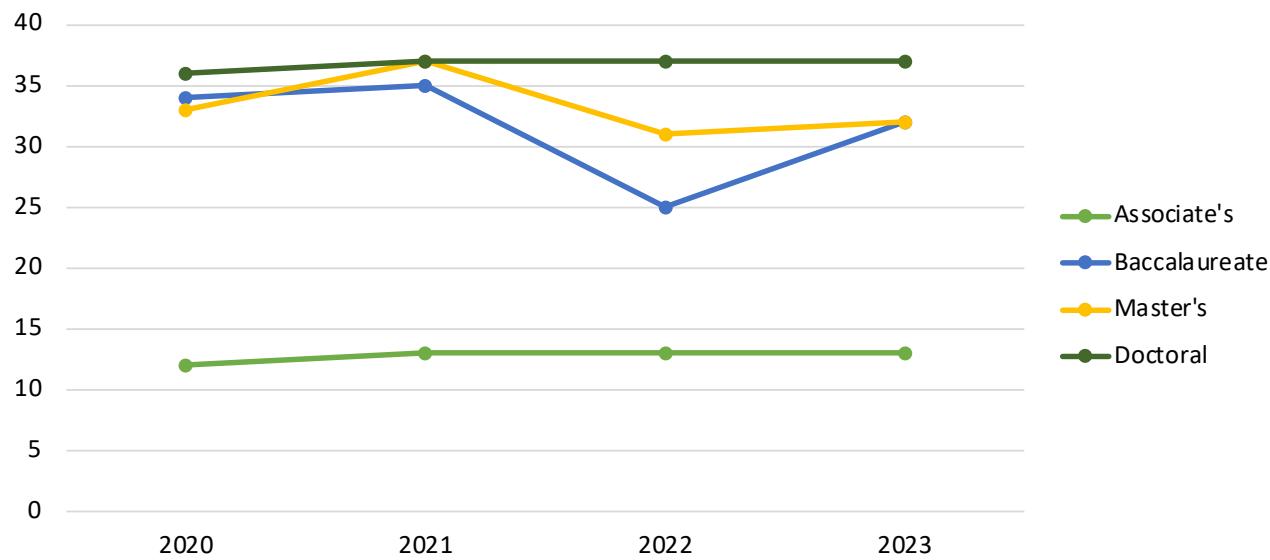


Figure 1. Average % of total expenditures spent on ongoing commitments to subscriptions 2020–2023.

## Staffing Levels

Staffing is another area of growth. For most types of employees, the average number of employees per institution has increased. As shown in figure 2, the average number of librarians at an institution is up 2% over 2022, other professional staff have grown by 2%, and

## The Future of IPEDS AL Component Survey

Of special note, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, of the Institute for Education Sciences in the US Department of Education), which runs IPEDS, proposed eliminating the academic library component survey and issued a call for comments on March 3, 2024. Many library organizations and individuals responded to oppose the removal.\* As of mid-January 2025, when this article went to press, NCES had not yet issued a final decision.

\* For example, see "American Library Association, Association of College and Research Libraries, Association of Research Libraries, and Association of Southeastern Research Libraries Comment on Proposed Removal of the Academic Libraries Component from NCES IPEDS," communication to the Manager of the Strategic Collections and Clearance Governance and Strategy Division, May 2, 2024, [https://www.ala.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/library\\_comments\\_ED-2024-SCC-0040.pdf](https://www.ala.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/library_comments_ED-2024-SCC-0040.pdf).

the average FTE of student assistants is up 8%. Only the average number of “All other paid staff” decreased, and only by 0.5%. More breakdowns related to staffing can be found in ACRL’s comprehensive report.<sup>5</sup>

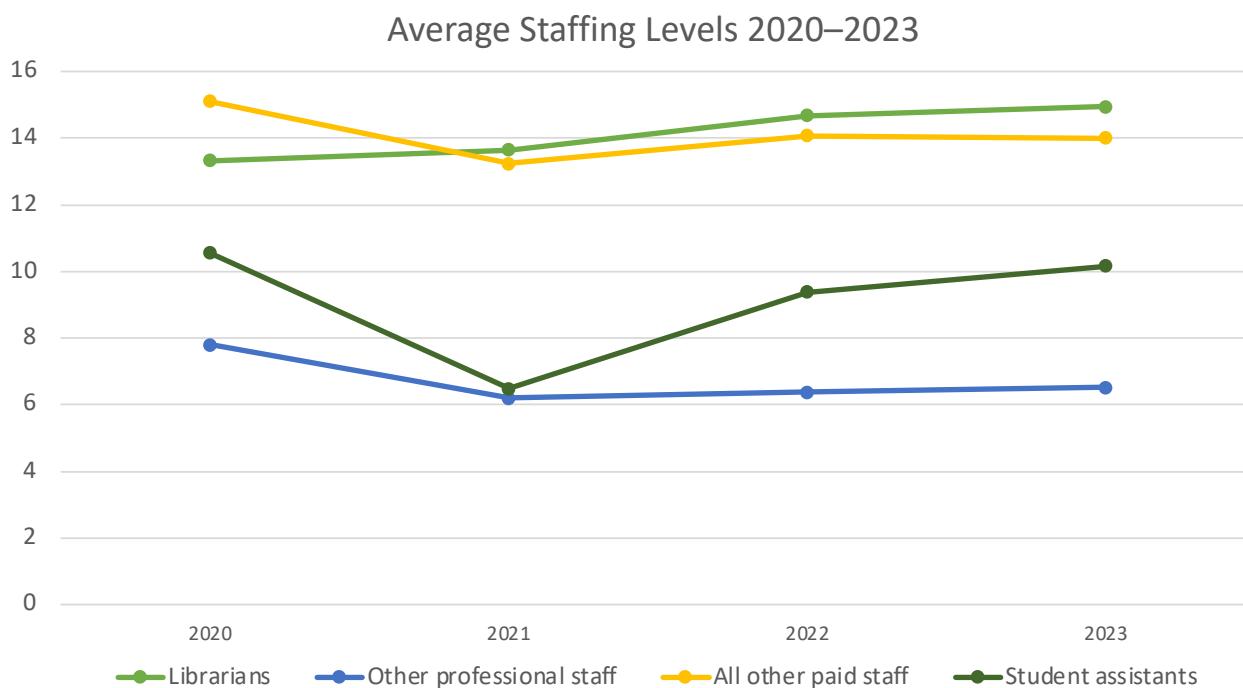


Figure 2. Average staffing levels 2020-2023.

## Services

### *Information Services to Individuals*

Data about transactions and consultations for 2023 had some interesting outliers that made comparison over time difficult. While the average institution data stayed below 10,000 interactions, there were at least three institutions that reported more than 477,000, and one that had almost 6 million. “Transactions and Consultations (if unable to report separately)” may contain some duplication with data reported in the Consultations or Transactions fields. It seems there may still be confusion about how to report, as brought up last year.<sup>6</sup> The editorial board will examine 2024 data next spring and review this for clarity in the instructions for the 2025 survey.

### *Average Annual Gate Count*

In the interest of seeing how library visits have rebounded since COVID-19, figure 3 represents the average annual gate count over the past four years (not including data from institutions who only reported their gate count for a “typical week.” It seems that the average gate counts at all institutions are slightly different than their 2020 numbers.

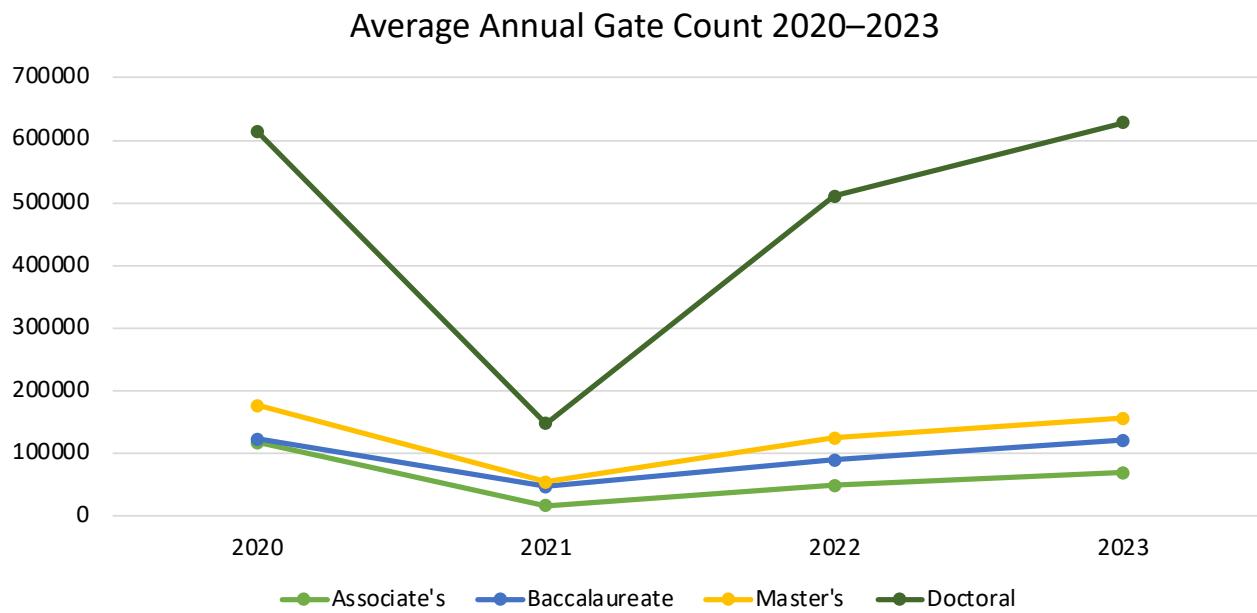


Figure 3. Average annual gate count 2020–2023.

## Collections

### *Average Physical Collection Size*

Because some campuses undertook aggressive weeding during pandemic closures, we were curious to see how, if at all, physical collection size has changed. When considering all materials and institutions in the aggregate, total physical collection size increased slightly, by 3%, from 2020 to 2023. However, when disaggregating by material type and institution class, some interesting differences emerged:

- The average Total Physical Collection declined at Associates, Masters, and doctoral institutions by 3–4% and increased at Baccalaureate institutions by 10%.
- The average Physical Media Collection at Masters Comprehensive institutions changed from 41,149 to 28,128, a decrease of 32%.

### *Interlibrary Loan*

On average, doctoral institutions are loaning and borrowing about two-thirds of materials through interlibrary loan (ILL) than they did in 2020. Baccalaureate institutions are the opposite, with a 33% increase in materials loaned, and an increase of 46% in materials borrowed. The average changes at Associates and Masters institutions were mixed. The average amount of ILL materials loaned is down by 20% and items borrowed are down by 29% from 2020.

## Library Trends in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The 2023 Trends questions replicated those asked in 2020 about steps academic libraries have taken to support EDI, a core commitment for ACRL, ALA, and many university and college campuses. The editorial board felt it was important to pose these questions without alteration to facilitate longitudinal data analysis. While this article reports highlights from aggregate national data, a forthcoming conference paper<sup>7</sup> more closely analyzes changes over time, differences among institution types, and—because state legislatures are attacking professional values around EDI—it also analyzes responses in affected states.

The five Trends questions were presented to respondents in three groups: first, goals: 1.1 whether the library has formal, written goal(s) for EDI (yes/no) and 1.2 the focus of EDI goal(s) (15 options); second, library activities related to EDI (18 options); and third, hiring and retention: 3.1 strategies to hire (14 options) and 3.2 retain (6 options) staff from underrepresented groups. To analyze this data more fully, we relied on tables in Tableau created using exported data from Benchmark.<sup>8</sup>

The number of academic libraries responding to any Trends question was 1,458 in 2020 and 1,331 in 2023. In summary, the changes from 2020 to 2023 were the following:

- 10% increase in the proportion of libraries reporting formal, written goals for EDI.
- 46% increase in the proportion of libraries reporting focus areas for their EDI goals.
- The top three EDI goal focus areas and top four EDI activities remained the same with declines in the proportion of respondents selecting each.
- The only EDI activities to increase were conduct periodic antiracism audits and incorporate EDI into library instruction.
- There were slight decreases in the proportion of academic libraries undertaking EDI activities (3%) and implementing strategies to hire (1%) and retain (3%) staff from underrepresented groups.

In 2023, 37% of academic libraries reported having formal, written goals for EDI, a 10% increase from 2020 when 27% of those responding said “yes.” Doctoral institutions were again most likely to have formal, written EDI goals at 59%, followed by baccalaureate colleges at 36%, masters colleges and universities at 31%, and associates colleges at 27%. Interestingly, far more libraries indicated a focus for their EDI goals than answered “yes” to having formal, written goals in 2023. This would seem to indicate that many have informal, unwritten EDI goals. Furthermore, the 70% of libraries indicating a goal focus in 2023 is a substantial increase from the 24% of libraries doing so in 2020, as shown in figure 4.

The top three focus areas for EDI goals remained the same, with a decline in the proportion of respondents reporting each as shown in figure 5: library collections (from 88% in 2020 to 81% in 2023), fostering an inclusive climate (from 89% in 2020 to 73% in 2023), and accessibility (from 78% in 2020 to 73% in 2023).

Despite the increase in the proportion of academic libraries that reported having formal, written EDI goals and a focus for their EDI goals, the proportion of libraries undertaking specific EDI activities—whether or not they had goals or focus areas—dropped from 93% in 2020 to 90% in 2023. Likewise, there was a decline in the proportion of libraries reporting strategies to hire (from 73% in 2020 to 72% in 2023) and to retain (from 64% in 2020 to 61% in 2023) staff from underrepresented groups, as shown in figure 6.

The top four EDI activities remained the same and the proportion of libraries undertaking each dropped from 2020 to 2023, as shown in figure 7: attend programming and/or events related to EDI (from 84% in 2020 to 83% in 2023), support textbook affordability initiatives (from 81% in 2020 to 74% in 2023), support staff participation in professional development for EDI (from 77% in 2020 to 72% in 2023), and collect and preserve materials related to underrepresented and marginalized groups (from 74% in 2020 to 72% in 2023).

Library activities declined for 16 of the 18 response options. Aside from an increase in the category “other” (from 5% in 2020 to 7% in 2023), the only EDI activities with an increase were conduct periodic antiracism audits (from 7.5% in 2020 to 8.2% in 2023) and incorporate EDI into library instruction (from 41% in 2020 to 43% in 2023). The decline in EDI activities warrants further exploration, given that the field espouses the centrality of EDI among its core values, competences, and ethical principles.<sup>9</sup> Additional data is required to explain why the decrease in activities occurred.

A closer look at 2023 responses about hiring staff from underrepresented groups reveals that, of 14 response options, only one strategy was used by the majority: 60% posted positions to a diverse range of audiences. Other highly ranked strategies were including an explicit EDI statement in job postings (48%), training search committees on best practices for inclusive searches (which increased slightly from 44.5% in 2020 to 44.9% in 2023), and offering implicit bias and/or cultural competency training for library staff (43%).

Notably, these were also the top four EDI strategies for recruitment reported in 2020. In addition to training search committees, the proportion of respondents increased for two

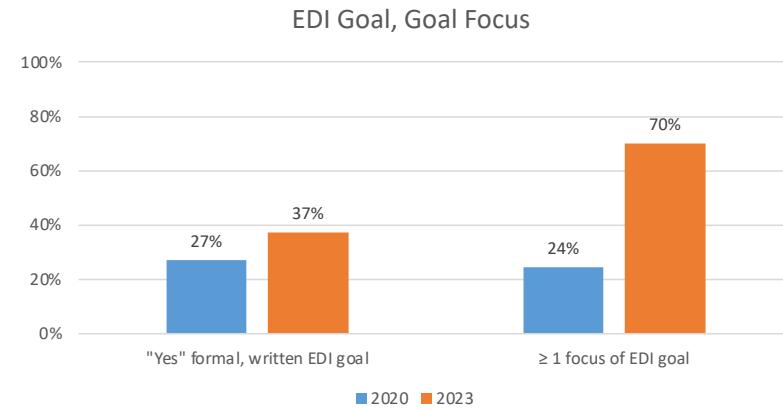


Figure 4. Proportion of academic libraries with EDI goal and/or goal focus, 2020 and 2023.

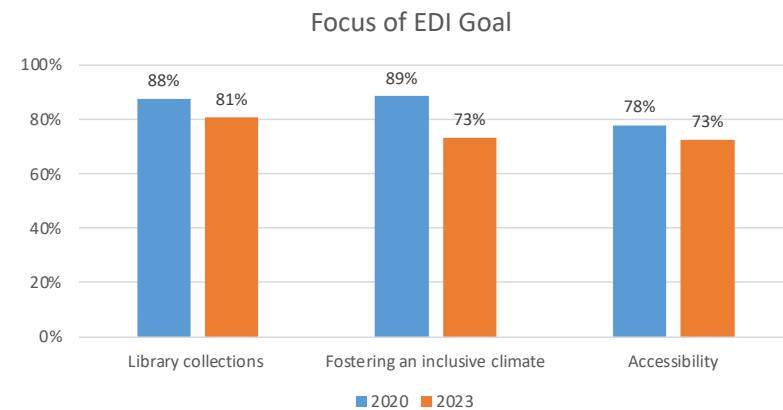


Figure 5. Top EDI goal focus by proportion of respondents, 2020 and 2023.

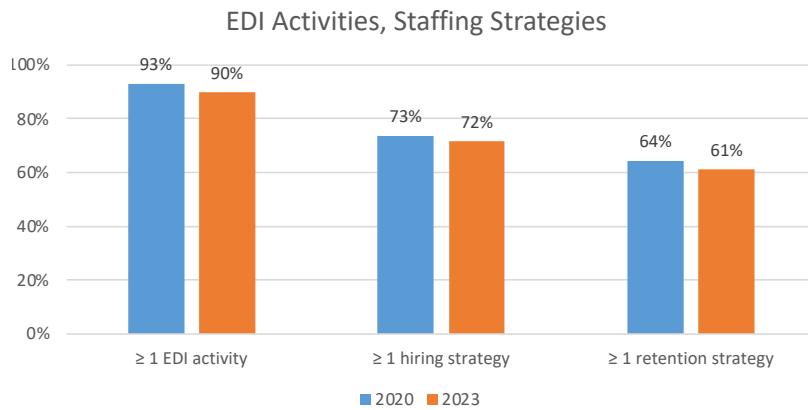


Figure 6. Proportion of academic libraries undertaking at least one EDI activity, hiring strategy, or retention strategy, 2020 and 2023.

other hiring strategies: rewriting position descriptions to encourage a broader pool of applicants (from 35% in 2020 to 41% in 2023) and requiring candidates to demonstrate support for EDI initiatives in their job applications (from 24% in 2020 to 25% in 2023). Additionally, a larger proportion of libraries reported no specific efforts have been made to hire staff from underrepresented groups (from 15% in 2020 to 17% in 2023).

In terms of retaining staff from underrepresented groups, of six response options, the only strategy used by the majority of reporting institutions in 2023 was fostering an inclusive workplace culture (68%). The option with the next highest response indicated that 28% of academic libraries made no intentional efforts to retain staff from underrepresented groups, compared to 24% in 2020. The proportion decreased for all options, except “other.”

The responses to these two questions on diversity hiring and retention strategies revealed that many libraries have taken few steps, if any, to address the lack of representation of minoritized racial/ethnic populations in the profession. Like the decrease in EDI activities, the low and declining rate of hiring and retention strategies warrants further investigation. Moreover, the decline in EDI activities and hiring and retention strategies concurrent with an increase in libraries that have EDI goals and goal focus areas deserves further investigation.

## Conclusion: Using the Survey Results

The annual ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey is the largest of its kind and offers the most comprehensive picture of academic library budgets, staffing, teaching, services, collections, and more. These results can help libraries with planning, benchmarking, and advocating for the value of academic libraries. With a full subscription to ACRL Benchmark, a library can designate its own peer group and make tailored comparisons. For those new to benchmarking and unsure of how to identify peers, each year academic institutions choose their peer institutions when reporting their data to IPEDS, and this information is easily available.<sup>10</sup>

Beyond using the trends and statistics data, the Academic Library Trends and Statistics Editorial Board encourages all academic libraries to complete the 2024 survey, which launched in September 2024 and closes in Spring 2025.

The survey is developed and administered annually by the ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey Editorial Board<sup>11</sup> in collaboration with ACRL staff. The editorial board recognizes the many contributions of ACRL staff Gena Parsons-Diamond and Sara Goek and their valuable historic knowledge, helpful advice, and administrative support. *xx*

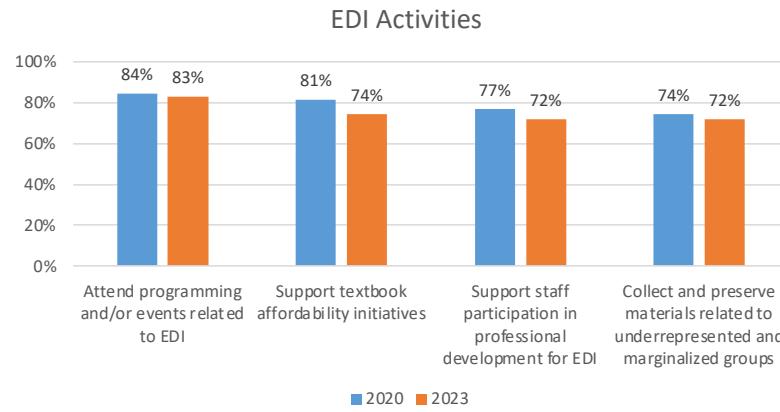


Figure 7. Top EDI activities by proportion of respondents, 2020 and 2023.

## Notes

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8. The authors thank Sara Goek for her talents in creating Tableau tables for the ACRL 2025 conference paper, also used for this article.
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Leo S. Lo

# AI Literacy

A Guide for Academic Libraries

As artificial intelligence (AI) technologies increasingly shape our society, workforce, and personal lives, the need for comprehensive AI literacy is more important than ever. AI literacy goes beyond understanding AI tools; it equips individuals to critically evaluate, ethically navigate, and practically apply AI in real-world scenarios.

This essay provides a guide to AI literacy that addresses technical, ethical, critical, and societal dimensions of AI, preparing learners to thrive in an AI-embedded world.

## What is AI Literacy?

AI literacy is the ability to understand, use, and think critically about AI technologies and their impact on society, ethics, and everyday life. This broad definition encompasses several interconnected components, each essential for developing a well-rounded understanding of AI.

## The Need for AI Literacy in Libraries

Just as libraries once championed print, digital, and information literacy, we are now well-placed to become key players in advancing AI literacy as technology shapes the future. With AI transforming how information is retrieved, content is created, and decisions are made, librarians have a crucial role to play in helping our communities understand and engage thoughtfully with these technologies.

For library staff, AI literacy is essential in two key areas:

1. **Professional Development:** Equipping staff with the knowledge and skills to effectively integrate AI tools into library services and daily operations, enhancing efficiency and innovation.
2. **Community Engagement:** Empowering librarians to serve as educators, guiding patrons to critically evaluate and responsibly interact with AI-driven systems, fostering informed and ethical engagement.

## The Components of AI Literacy

### Technical Knowledge

We don't need to be coding experts to understand AI. Instead, it's about getting a basic grasp of essential concepts like machine learning, algorithms, and neural networks. Imagine being able to explain why a search engine prioritizes certain results or why a chatbot might misinterpret a question. This level of familiarity helps move beyond the surface and enables

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more meaningful discussions about how AI works and why it behaves the way it does. With this foundational understanding, individuals can approach AI with greater confidence and curiosity.

## **Ethical Awareness**

AI systems don't exist in isolation; they function within complex human contexts and carry ethical responsibilities. In addition to understanding how these technologies work, ethical awareness is about critically examining the values and assumptions built into them. For instance, when a library employs an AI-driven recommendation tool, being ethically aware involves scrutinizing whether its recommendations uphold fairness, inclusivity, and transparency. It involves considering the real-world impacts of technical decisions, such as potential biases, accountability gaps, and privacy concerns. Ethical awareness calls for actively engaging with the broader implications of AI, recognizing that these choices affect people in tangible ways.

## **Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking in AI literacy goes beyond merely questioning the outputs of AI systems. It involves leveraging skills like information literacy to critically assess the sources, data, and underlying assumptions that shape these models. In teaching information literacy, librarians can expand traditional evaluation techniques to include critical assessments of AI-generated information and its biases. For instance, librarians can draw on their expertise to examine the information an AI tool produces, probing into the data it was trained on and considering whose voices or perspectives might have been left out.

This practice encourages a more mindful engagement with AI, helping individuals understand that these technologies aren't infallible or neutral. As AI increasingly influences our perceptions and decisions, critical thinking empowers people to reclaim their agency and build a more informed, discerning relationship with technology.

## **Practical Skills**

Practical skills are essential for using AI tools effectively in real-world situations. This includes building confidence to experiment with tools like ChatGPT, Claude, or Midjourney and understanding their relevance in specific contexts. For librarians, this might mean integrating AI-driven tools to improve research support or enhance digital collections.

However, practical skills go beyond proficiency with existing tools. They also encompass the judgment to know when and why to rely on AI and when human decision-making is necessary. As AI technologies evolve, fostering a culture of continuous learning and exploration is crucial to developing these skills.

## **Societal Impact**

The societal impact of AI literacy is more than just understanding technical details; it prompts us to examine how AI reshapes the world we live in—culturally, economically, and environmentally. AI systems can perpetuate existing power structures or disrupt them in ways we might not anticipate. To fully grasp this, we must examine pressing issues such as biased hiring algorithms that can deepen inequalities, pervasive surveillance technologies that erode privacy, and the ways AI contributes to widening economic gaps.

Sustainability is a vital element of the broader conversation about AI's societal impact. While AI remains resource-intensive with a notable environmental footprint, discussions on sustainability should encompass more than just reducing consumption. The real potential lies in using AI to drive systemic changes that promote social and environmental well-being. For example, AI can optimize energy management in cities, creating smarter, more sustainable urban environments. It also has the capacity to revolutionize agricultural supply chains, increasing efficiency, reducing waste, and supporting sustainable practices across production and distribution. By integrating sustainability into the societal dimension of AI literacy, we can better understand AI's role not just as a technological advancement, but as a force capable of reshaping our economic, social, and environmental landscapes for the better.

## Cross-Cutting Themes

In addition to these core components, several cross-cutting themes influence how we approach AI literacy:

1. **Human-AI Collaboration:** Focuses on using AI to enhance, not replace, human abilities. It promotes a mindset where individuals see AI as a supportive partner in tasks like decision-making, creativity, and problem-solving, rather than as a substitute for human judgment and skills.
2. **Lifelong Learning and Adaptation:** Emphasizes that AI literacy is not a one-time skill but an ongoing journey. With the rapid evolution of AI, continuous learning is crucial to staying updated on new tools, navigating emerging ethical challenges, and adapting to shifting societal impacts.
3. **Equity and Access:** Highlights the importance of inclusivity in AI literacy initiatives. It calls for libraries and educational institutions to provide equitable access to AI learning opportunities, ensuring that individuals from all backgrounds and skill levels can engage meaningfully with AI technologies.

These cross-cutting themes interact with every component of AI literacy, reinforcing the principles of collaboration, adaptability, and inclusivity throughout the entire framework.

## Conclusion

For academic libraries, AI literacy is emerging as a foundational competency essential for navigating a world increasingly dominated by algorithms. Increasing our focus on AI literacy, including an emphasis on technical knowledge, ethical awareness, critical thinking, practical skills, and societal impact, encourages a deeper understanding of AI as more than just a set of digital tools. By embracing AI literacy, libraries can lead efforts to demystify AI, offer targeted programs, and foster interdisciplinary collaborations to explore AI's influence on research and learning. Through partnerships with faculty and campus technology units, librarians can integrate AI literacy into courses, create learning communities, and provide practical training on AI-driven tools. In doing so, academic libraries position ourselves as key players in shaping critical conversations about AI and guiding the next generation of scholars to engage thoughtfully and ethically with these technologies. <sup>22</sup>

# Gone and Mostly Forgotten

A Slice of Academic Librarianship's Professional Past

Librarians of a certain era may remember *Library Issues*. From 1980 through 2016, Mountainside Publishing published five or six issues per year on the prevailing academic library issues of the day. What made this publication unique is that it was not written for an audience of academic librarians. Rather, *Library Issues* was intentionally designed for the needs of academic administrators who needed a quick introduction to and insight into any library matter. The intended reader was likely the provost or president, depending to whom the library dean or director reported. *Library Issues* served as the library dean or director's go-to publication to make the case for additional resources. No doubt there were issues that went right to stacks or waste bin. Library leaders sometimes have their reasons for choosing to make sure the academic leadership is better off being kept in the dark on a particular issue. Though less intentionally intended for the academic library practitioner, the issues served as timely primers on a host of topics for the library audience.

## Origin of *Library Issues*

*Library Issues* was the brainchild of Richard Dougherty.<sup>1</sup> Dougherty led an illustrious career in academic librarianship that included dean positions at the University of Michigan and University of California Berkeley. He was a professor at the University of Michigan School of Information and served as the interim dean at one point. He's a former president of the American Library Association and was instrumental in starting the Association of College and Research Libraries conferences. He was the first recipient of the Hugh Atkinson award<sup>2</sup> for risk-taking and leadership in 1988. He received the Joseph Lippincott award<sup>3</sup> for lifetime service to ALA in 1997 and was named ACRL's Academic and Research Librarian of the Year in 1983. He was the editor of *College & Research Libraries* and later helped found another journal you may have heard of—*The Journal of Academic Librarianship*. With a record like that, creating and publishing *Library Issues* for its entire run may seem like an afterthought. But of all these accomplishments, *Library Issues* has an enduring impact for academic librarianship.

So why is *College & Research Library News* devoting space to a publication that ceased in 2016? I would posit that knowing what's happened in the past can be as crucial as knowing what's happening right now. Why? One critical reason is to be well informed to make good decisions. Knowing academic librarianship's past can assist our understanding of contemporary issues—knowing how we got here, what we thought about key issues, and where we got it wrong. It recently came to my attention that nearly every issue of *Library Issues* is now

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digitized and accessible in HathiTrust.<sup>4</sup> Today's students of librarianship, aspiring to careers in academic libraries, could learn more about academic librarianship from this collection than most textbooks. The first sentence of the first issue may sound familiar to us all, no matter when we came to this profession:

Academic libraries are in trouble and too many academic administrators are unaware of the severity of the situation.

Warnings of impending doom in college and university libraries is a familiar refrain in our profession, but a publication that referred to itself as "Briefings for Academic Officers" needed to focus on the most challenging and controversial issues that would get a provost or president to pay attention, ask questions, and take a personal interest. Mundane, day-to-day fodder was of no interest to the *Library Issues* editors—and that's what makes it so relevant to our professional history as a collection of our greatest challenges between 1980 and 2016.

## Publishing Process

Here's how *Library Issues* worked. The editorial board, usually five or six academic librarians plus Richard and Ann Dougherty (who personally edited the issues), served as the editorial board and decided what were the hottest, most challenging, or controversial issues of the time. The editors would typically meet at the ALA Midwinter Meeting for an hours-long roundtable discussion of those issues. That conversation resulted in a tentative schedule of the next year of issues, decided on by consensus. Then each editor agreed to author an individual issue, occasionally with a co-author or identifying a special guest to take on that issue. Early issues feature two or three brief reports, but in later years each issue focused on just a single topic. Writing an issue required authors to adopt a different mindset. Instead of writing for their fellow librarians, they needed to adopt language, examples, and a practical urgency that would grab the attention of academic administrators in a way they could grasp the issues. Any hint of librarian jargon or scholarly tones would result in a stern rebuke from the managing editor. Rather than offer a list of the notable librarians over the years who served on the editorial board and wrote the issues, names now mostly forgotten, suffice to say it was a veritable who's who of academic librarianship, more than a few who are now in ACRL's Hall of Fame.<sup>5</sup>

## Into the Archives

While there's much to learn from 36 years of a publication devoted to the practice of academic librarianship, one way to better understand what *Library Issues* meant to the profession is to delve into the archives. Examining issues across the decades provides insight into how academic librarianship evolved over time. While it continuously stayed true to its core mission to inform academic administrators about the issues of the day, *Library Issues* evolved as well. For example, the July 1982 issue offered a collection of editors covering several topics, one of which focused on the theft of special collection materials.<sup>6</sup> It was a rarely discussed topic then. This issue no doubt contributed to the introduction of far more stringent access policies and security systems in academic library rare book rooms.

What *Library Issues* did effectively over the years for both academic librarians and academic administrators was to frame library literature research studies in practical terms for

interpretation and action. Consider the July 1994 issue's coverage of the convergence of the academic library and campus computing under one division, often led by a high-ranking information technology administrator.<sup>7</sup> There was much debate in the profession about the effectiveness of such mergers and the potential impact on library staff, students, and faculty. Prior to the publication of this issue, there were several influential studies of these mergers in the academic library research literature. Presented in the form of a case study from a single institution where the two units were merged, it condensed multiple research articles into a format optimized for busy administrators needing to grasp the essence of the issue.

A random walk-through *Library Issues* brings attention to the degree to which academic librarians have worked with a never-ending succession of new technologies. From the early days of national bibliographic utilities to the dawn of the World Wide Web to the spread of social media, one or more issues per year spoke to the growing interdependence between academic libraries and technology. These issues sought to make academic administrators aware of this connection and the growing need for institutional support that would allow academic librarians to acquire and apply new technologies for learning and research support. One such issue appeared in November 2005 and offered an analysis of what it referred to as the “cornucopia of library technology.”<sup>8</sup> Those reading it now will likely find the mentioned “hot” technologies mildly amusing. Some of the technologies are still significant to library operations while others have faded into the technology dustbin, but the emphasis was always on helping library deans and directors, as well as those to whom they reported, to better understand how these technologies fit into academic library services in support of students and faculty.

In its fourth decade *Library Issues* continued to reflect the depth and breadth of challenges confronting academic librarians, but it veered into those campus issues related to open access, the emerging textbook crisis, library as academic partner, big data, print versus digital collections, and other areas where the library was well suited to provide a leadership role.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, HathiTrust currently offers no way to subject search specific issues among the archival content it holds. The current workaround is to use a database such as ProQuest's *Library and Information Science Abstracts* to search for indexed *Library Issues* content. With the exact volume and issue numbers, the original issues can then be easily located in HathiTrust.

## Changing Times

*Library Issues* had its flaws. Community college librarians claimed it failed to reflect their challenges. Too few issues did. Efforts to add racial diversity in the later years were made, but ultimately the editors failed to add a colleague of color to the editorial board. As no-table library publications established policies for openness, as a small, for-profit publication operating on thin margins, the best it could do was to offer limited free access to the latest issue. What caused the demise of *Library Issues*? At times, the editors struck out and completely missed a topic of importance that should have been an issue. It certainly wasn't the cost. It was always affordably priced. Over time the number of paying subscribers declined, likely owing to the publication's print-only format when readers increasingly demanded an electronic version they could easily share with staff and academic administrators.

As the median age of the editorial board increased, there was a recognition that a new

generation of academic library leaders has less interest in an occasional print newsletter that competed ineffectively against blogs and other social media outlets. Quite possibly, it diminished in relevance as social media became the communication outlet of choice for many newer-to-the-profession academic librarians. Over time, academic library deans and directors found other ways, preferring electronic communication, to share the issues of the day with their provosts.

No doubt all those factors contributed in some way to the end of *Library Issues*. Though it fades from the memory of academic librarians who once subscribed and is virtually unknown to those now entering the profession, it is perhaps best remembered as a slice of our profession's past, a reflection of the challenges and change over its nearly four-decade run. Now it serves as a chronicle of how far academic librarianship has advanced, reflecting our many waves of human and technological transformations. Aspiring academic librarians and those new to the profession may find it a worthwhile investment of their time to browse through the HathiTrust collection of issues to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the evolution of academic librarianship.

Is there a place in academic librarianship now for a *Library Issues*-type publication? There does seem to be a gap in our academic library literature that misses out on the exploration of the issues of day from the perspective of what non-library academic administrators would want or need to know about contemporary challenges of library operations. For example, who is currently writing about the challenges of integrating artificial intelligence into library operations in a way that would speak to presidents, provosts, and deans to gain their support for new technology development? I see a need for a space where academic librarians write and reflect on change within higher education more broadly and how we adapt to it, again focusing on an audience made up of non-library administrators. Doing so would provide these administrators with insight and awareness into the critical functions academic librarians provide to their institutions. This profession cannot afford a complacency that leads more academic administrators to conclude that their librarians are "a luxury that we can't afford."<sup>10</sup>

Yes, at one time there was a serious discussion on the future of microforms in an emerging digital library environment, as odd and perhaps irrelevant as that may seem today.<sup>11</sup> That said, your academic library is still likely in possession of microform cards and reels, along with the necessary reading equipment. It is often the case where we are required to have one foot in the past as we navigate our way through contemporary challenges. *Library Issues* may be long gone, but fortunately it remains forever preserved in HathiTrust for consumption by future generations of academic librarians who believe that learning from the past will help them to succeed in the future. 

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# Meet the Candidates for ALA President

Vote in the Election this Spring

The ACRL Board of Directors posed the following questions to the candidates for ALA president, and *C&RL News* is pleased to publish their responses. Each candidate was given 1,500 words to respond to six questions and contribute an optional opening statement. The responses are identified under each question.

## Opening Statements

**Lindsay Cronk:** I'm Lindsay Cronk, Dean of Libraries at Tulane University, research librarian, your ally and partner in knowledge equity work, and candidate for President of the American Library Association 2026. I am also a huge fan and ongoing beneficiary of ACRL's contributions to the profession. I came to ALA by way of state associations and then divisions, and I know the Association well—the good and the bad. Colleagues call me a force of nature, a dynamo, and the "real deal." I'll take [the endorsements](#), but what you should know is that I'm loud because I'm confident. I believe in you, in the future of our profession, and our ability to meet this moment as a team. **ALA needs a president with the moral courage and expansive vision to help us thrive in an increasingly chaotic environment.** I am ready to serve. In answering your questions, I seek your input and expertise.

**Maria McCauley:** I am Maria McCauley, and I ask for your vote for President of the American Library Association (ALA). I am an experienced association and library leader, a Past President of the Public Library Association, and I have long excelled at bringing people together to work on important issues facing libraries.

I've enjoyed a career in academic and public libraries including directing libraries for the past 13 years (at the Cambridge Public Library since 2016) and working in academic libraries for 10 years. I've been a member of ALA since I was a Spectrum Scholar, and have worked to support equity and inclusion, access, and intellectual freedom in all of my roles. For example, I served on an ACRL committee that created cultural competencies and an ACRL committee that reviewed travel scholarship support for Spectrum scholars.

In my 25 years as an ALA member, in addition to serving as past president of PLA, I was named a [Spectrum Scholar](#), and served as a two-term ALA councilor, an ALA Executive Board member, a member of the Committee on Legislation, and a member of the Finance and Audit Committee. I am a member of IFLA, all National Organizations of Librarians of Color, the Freedom to Read Foundation, the Massachusetts Library Association, and the New England Library Association.

I earned my BA from Ohio Wesleyan, my MLIS from the University of Pittsburgh, and my PhD from Simmons.

My presidential priorities focus on increasing equity and access, advocating for libraries and intellectual freedom, deepening the ALA member experience, and promoting sustainability. You can read more about my vision and goals at [mariaforlibraries.com](http://mariaforlibraries.com).

**1. As the future ALA president, please share your thoughts about what you would like to accomplish with the divisions during your presidential year.**

**Cronk:** As ALA president, I will prioritize strengthening [the relationships between ALA and its divisions](#), ensuring they remain vibrant, sustainable homes for members while deepening support for workers. Divisions like ACRL are essential experts on critical issues like intellectual freedom, media literacy, and scholarly communication. ALA should rely on ACRL for leadership and advice in these areas, and as President, I would seek out ACRL's advice in those crucial areas during my presidential term. My question to ACRL members—what do you want a president to accomplish? How can the president uplift your work? **How can we co-create the Association we deserve?**

[My pathway through the Association](#) meant I first found a home in the [Library Information Technology](#) (LITA) division and built a new home with colleagues across ALA to establish [Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures](#). I have experienced and harnessed the transformative potential of divisions. I've built mentoring programs, created spaces for professional development, developed awards, and created [weekly Connect posts I called “Happy Friday”](#) to celebrate progress and keep members informed.

As president, my Presidential agenda would focus on sustaining and division communities by addressing financial challenges that impact their success and getting creative about shared solutions. **What are your ideas?**

**Andrea Jamison:** One of my priority areas include working with internal and external partners in order to ramp up advocacy for pro-library legislation and protections for librarians, particularly in response to our current social/political climate. There's significant misinformation about librarians and the work that we do, especially as it relates to intellectual freedom. Interest groups have labeled librarians as disseminators of obscene materials that "will" indoctrinate and/or corrupt the epistemological values of young people. These arguments have led to the proposal of [anti-library legislation](#) across the nation, some of which seeks to criminalize librarians. Unabated, this type of harmful rhetoric can deter librarians from entering the field or even serve as a catalyst for mass exodus of existing library workers.

In my home state, I've witnessed firsthand the passage of one of the earliest anti-censorship bills, and I was an active advocate for this bill through my work with Congressman Danny K. Davis' advisory committee and my role as a frequent town hall speaker. From that experience, I've started collaborating with a group of stakeholders to ensure that pro-library legislation and protections for librarians gain momentum and success.

One critical area that I plan to address if elected is the need for increased documentation of how censorship, anti-DEI efforts, and anti-library legislation impact librarians and the communities we serve. This will require research and scholarship across the field of librarianship and education to examine both the short- and long-term social, economic, and educational effects of these challenges. I would prioritize enhancing collaboration across ALA divisions, particularly those that can fund research to document these impacts.

Academic and research librarians play a key role in this scholarship. ACRL and LRRT have already demonstrated leadership in funding academic research. By increasing inter-division/

roundtable collaboration, we can enhance the resources available for researchers, enabling them to gather critical data that state organizations can use to advocate for pro-library legislation. Additionally, these research initiatives will enrich ALA's legislative toolkit and provide us with the evidence we need to continue preparing librarians for effective advocacy in their communities and beyond.

Countering misinformation is another priority. Given our current social and political climate, there has been significant misinformation about librarians. Librarians have been accused of providing obscene materials to communities and attempting to indoctrinate individuals through what has been considered a "woke" agenda.

I believe it is essential to shift the current narrative by launching targeted media campaigns that highlight the vital role libraries play in supporting intellectual freedom and fostering the development of critical information and digital literacies. I have cultivated strong relationships and alliances with publishers, authors, educators, and community leaders who are eager to collaborate with ALA leaders and members on this important initiative.

I would advocate for increased support of school librarians. School librarians have been at the forefront of censorship challenges and backlash. As such, part of my goal as a presidential candidate would be to advocate for ALA to increase engagement with school administrators through membership and conference opportunities. While some state library associations offer opportunities to school administrators, I think it's important for the ALA to engage administrators in order to provide a national view of some of the more complex censorship issues. Some school administrators don't have a purview of the importance of school librarians. Separate from academic librarians, whose deans are situated in library work, school librarians are often solo within their respective schools. This type of collaboration could potentially improve working conditions for school librarians by helping administrators develop a more nuanced understanding of first amendment rights in library settings, the importance of diversity in library collections, the value of information literacy, and how to navigate censorship challenges. I'd work with various ALA leadership, divisions, state chapter leaders, and roundtables to ensure that once recruited, we are able to offer targeted information sessions, research, resources, and toolkits to school administrators.

I'd advocate for transparency in ALA Leadership and Budget. ALA is currently searching for a new executive director, which will handle the daily management of the organization. We have recently had a change in leadership and an increase in debt. As a member driven organization, I feel it is important that members have increased opportunities to have a voice in decisions that will impact the longevity of the organization. As a former ALA councilor, I have proactively advocated for more transparency and better channels of communication to membership regarding finances and vetting process for the executive director.

**McCauley:** Divisions are critical to advancing the goals of the academic library profession and help to support the broader vision of the American Library Association (ALA). As the future ALA president, I will form a working group of all the division presidents to build a strong and productive network between division and executive board leadership. With regular meetings during president-elect and presidential years, I will work to ensure clear communications, to better understand and amplify the priorities of the divisions, to collaborate on ways to attract diverse library workers, and to partner on member engagement.

I will also work with divisions to champion information and policy efforts that support libraries and augment the impact of our work. I will build coalitions and partnerships with

ALA groups, state chapters and offices, and others to raise awareness on key issues, including ACRL's Legislative Agenda.

In addition, I will invite divisions to participate in reintroducing Jim Rettig's Scholarships for a Day. This initiative will engage diverse students in exploring libraries as a career at conference sites. ACRL will be invited to participate—exploring partnerships with area community colleges to encourage entry level academic library workers to participate as well. See section 4 below.

I will advance sustainability in all its dimensions (inclusively, financially, and ecologically). I will support groups such as the Sustainability Round Table, who are helping libraries to plan for sustainability and invite ACRL, ALA-APA, and others to collaborate on building a resilient, sustainable, and supported workforce. I will also support ACRL and academic libraries in their exploration and advancement of open education resources (OER) and sustainability and AI.

## ***2. What opportunities do you see for increasing member recruitment, engagement, and retention in ACRL? What barriers exist?***

**Cronk:** ACRL can grow its membership by leveraging its expanding leadership in scholarly communication, academic freedom, and research equity. I recently met with the ACRL Board, and I am eager to connect in Minneapolis to learn more from members. The division already excels at creating tailored, career-stage-specific programming, and by strengthening mentorship opportunities and perhaps sharing them across other divisions with academic members, we can attract new members while retaining current ones.

However, systemic financial barriers remain a significant challenge. With tightening academic library budgets and lower than acceptable pay for library workers, institutional and individual limits on professional development have led to attrition and burnout. As someone who has worked in diverse library environments, including consortia, public, and private universities, I understand these constraints and would ensure that ACRL has the structural and financial support it needs to remain indispensable to its members. **This includes advocating for equitable pricing models and expanding accessible programming to reach all library workers.**

**How can we work directly with college and university libraries to avoid costs falling predominantly on individuals?** What are the barriers to providing knowledge equity and how can we address them to arrive at shared sustainability? These are the questions I look forward to asking and answering with ACRL's leaders and members.

**Jamison:** As an assistant professor of school librarianship and the Professional Development School (PDS) coordinator, I collaborate with school districts to align the interests of Illinois State University and our partner schools, with a particular focus on career pipelines. Many students, particularly those interested in education, are unaware of the diverse career paths available within librarianship.

One initiative I help lead is the annual [Future Teachers Conference](#), where we invite high school seniors to campus to explore various academic programs at the university. This event has drawn as many as 2,500 students in a single year. A similar model could be highly effective in recruiting future librarians. ALA, through partnerships between AASL, ALISE, and ACRL, could develop a School-to-Library Pipeline that introduces students to the field

before they enter college. The PLA could also serve as a partner for this initiative hosting smaller scale events to reach young adults within the community.

A dedicated Future Librarians Conference, virtual event, or career day could serve as an entry point for students to learn about the many professional opportunities in libraries, including academic librarianship. By intentionally directing recruitment efforts toward students as they prepare for college, we can help them see librarianship as a viable, rewarding career path. ACRL in particular could play a critical role by showcasing academic librarianship's impact on research, scholarship, and student success in higher education.

Our current socio-political climate presents significant challenges to recruitment and retention in academic librarianship. Misinformation about libraries and librarians (especially the false narratives that librarians promote harmful materials or engage in ideological indoctrination) can make the profession seem less attractive. The growing trend of proposed legislation that seeks to criminalize librarians for upholding intellectual freedom further exacerbates these concerns. This is why advocating for pro-library legislation and combating misinformation about the profession are central to my presidential platform.

**McCauley:** Despite some barriers (discussed below), there are multiple opportunities. Let's create clear pathways to engagement. I think that it is important to connect with students and early career ALA members and to emphasize opportunities to grow through divisions. This might involve partnering with the New Members Round Table or National Associations of Librarians of Color, and other groups on issues such as what careers in academic libraries look like and how to get your first academic job. It might also involve virtual networking. Personal touch points are always helpful, so it's critical to ensure that relevant groups and member leaders are creating opportunities for personal communications, both virtually and in person, including at regional meetups and national conferences. One of my goals is to create a peer-member-learning and growing-journey program that would match any interested ALA member with a peer to go through their association journey together. This may be an opportunity to collaborate with ACRL.

In addition to these connection opportunities, I will create pathways for engagement for early and mid-career professionals that provide opportunities for speaking engagements, writing, and presenting. These might include creating and encouraging participation in lightning talks and panels and virtual poster sessions. Other opportunities include continuing to support mentorship opportunities for growth and encouraging and supporting members to embrace increased responsibilities and leadership development opportunities. In this regard, it is important to focus on support for new managers and directors and to offer learning and growth opportunities for all. Continuing education offerings may include digital learning, skills-building, STEM, AI, leadership, management, inclusive practices, and more.

I will be seeking additional opportunities to provide professional development and support to mentor members from multiple sections, such as community colleges and access services, who may have barriers such as less travel funding during uncertain financial times, competition with other groups and associations for membership and time, and uncertainty among academic library workers about where to focus their work and careers. At a time when we see a retraction of support for equity and inclusion, library workers may also feel disillusioned about DEI statements. People may also not see themselves represented in the profession. I am interested in collaborating on strategies to increase membership engagement

and to advance equity and inclusion. Please see below for more of my thoughts on how to address these issues.

### ***3. How can ALA and ACRL support each other to encourage member participation and investment?***

**Cronk:** ALA and ACRL must collaborate to amplify each other's strengths. ALA can elevate ACRL's expertise on issues like open access, research equity, and academic freedom through its national advocacy efforts, ensuring academic perspectives are represented. At the same time, ACRL can contribute to ALA's broader initiatives on cross-cutting issues like censorship, workforce development, and digital transformation.

My experience building Core and launching its extensive professional development offerings has taught me how divisions can foster professional engagement while advancing ALA's goals and, above all, making the profession a healthier and better place. **Ultimately, wage equity is necessary for our members to be able to participate.** As president, I would focus on creating a reciprocal relationship between ALA and its divisions, providing resources to enhance their capacity for impact while streamlining operational processes. In my work with the Association for Research Libraries, I have begun to work with colleagues to consider wage floor guidance for academic library hiring. ACRL could be connected to this effort, and together we could enact systemic change. **How should ACRL be engaged in conversations about library pay levels and working conditions?**

**Jamison:** Reducing barriers to access is a key strategy for encouraging greater member participation and investment. As an ALA Type 1 member, myself and others face limitations due to limited job funding for travel and professional development. This often forces us to make tough choices about which memberships and conferences we can afford. For me, I must choose between attending the ALA Annual Conference, a division conference, or a state conference. Conference registration is typically paid in full and requires adherence to early registration deadlines to benefit from discounts.

Since ACRL holds its conference biennially, it may be worth exploring options to reduce financial barriers, particularly for Type 1 members who tend to pay the highest fees. For example, ACRL could consider offering a discounted two-year membership rate or a joint membership rate across two divisions, encouraging strategic partnerships among memberships. Additionally, freezing conference prices for Type 1 members beyond the early bird registration period could provide these members with added incentives to attend without the pressure of facing higher registration costs for missing the early deadlines.

**McCauley:** As both ALA and ACRL work to build and grow a vibrant connected library network, we can work together to highlight the stories of our members and the value they get from the organization. ACRL was fundamental in helping me to establish a budding professional national academic network of peers and mentors. Attending ACRL conferences helped me to build skills and learn about the issues facing academic libraries.

I know there are others at different points in their careers with compelling stories to share. Through peer member learning opportunities, peer leaders can highlight how becoming involved with ACRL and other divisions is helpful and can encourage each other to get involved at the division level. We can also host virtual networking events with ALA members and ACRL members.

As a legacy donor, I also see an opportunity for fundraising, highlighting why donor dollars matter by showcasing different ways people are supporting ALA and divisions, including ACRL.

**4. Please share specific ideas you have for partnering with ACRL (and other divisions) to advance equity and inclusion and to grow diversity of our membership.**

**Cronk:** I think there are real opportunities across and between ALA's divisions, and broadly across other membership organizations with research and academic library focuses. Partnering with ACRL and other divisions, we can expand and support initiatives that create leadership pathways for underrepresented professionals and address systemic barriers in the profession, particularly in higher ed. For example, we could create joint recognition programs for academic librarians advancing access work, inspired by Core's LIFT Awards or perhaps in tandem with them.

The ecosystem of libraries broadly and ALA particularly provides so much inspiration and opportunity. In considering what should follow LibLearnX, many members of different divisions have told me they believe their biannual conference could fill the gap. What if all biannual conferences were held in a shared location where individual programming could occur but cross-attendance and pollination were encouraged? Some of my best ideas come from ACRL, Core, and the Public Library Association (PLA). All have popular biannual conferences. There is so much opportunity to build inclusion by building community and finding cost and resource savings.

I also propose collaborative programming across divisions to develop strategies for recruiting and retaining diverse library workers. By aligning ACRL's expertise in higher education with ALA's broader advocacy efforts, we can ensure these initiatives resonate across the profession. **How can we achieve a sustainable, vibrant, and thriving future?**

**Jamison:** Diversity and inclusion are central to my work at Illinois State University, not only in my research but also in my role as a leader in faculty training on equitable practices. I am a trained ALA Racial Healing Practitioner, a community of practice leader for Diverse BookFinder, and serve as the social justice chair for the Institute of Human Education. If elected as ALA president I'd focus on how America's social and political landscape are impacting library workers and library services today. In this context, I would strategically focus on building coalitions between ALA's roundtables and divisions to increase support for funding that enables librarians to engage in research examining how current anti-DEI sentiments and legislation are affecting the field of librarianship. Library research data is crucial for helping librarians advocate for pro-library legislation and countering misinformation about the work we do.

With this strategic approach, ACRL can leverage its strength as a division of researchers to collaborate with school and children's librarians. Data from this partnership could be used to design professional development programs, equipping librarians with up-to-date trends and insights, and inform policies and practices to ensure libraries remain inclusive, equitable spaces for all. I would also leverage my work with Diverse BookFinder and the Institute of Humane Education to increase diversity and social justice training organization-wide.

**McCauley:** Let's advance equity and inclusion together. As mentioned above, I'd like to collaborate with ACRL on Scholarships for a Day to introduce diverse students to library conferences. I thank ACRL for their support of ALA Spectrum Scholarships and I'd like to

partner on supporting and inspiring ACRL Spectrum scholars and diverse emerging professionals. I am also happy to share my support for the importance of mentoring diverse new managers and first-time directors. I would welcome the opportunities to partner on panels that highlight diverse and intersectional emerging leaders, to talk about advancing equity and inclusion and to participate in meet-and-greets with diverse academic librarians—perhaps a collaboration with ACRL, Spectrum, and the National Associations of Librarians of Color. I also am interested in partnering with ACRL on encouraging research on advancing equity and inclusion in the field and the positive impact of a diverse library workforce. I will also invite groups including ACRL to join with me in continuing to reach out to LIS programs and iSchools to engage them in ALA, divisions, and other groups.

***5. In what specific ways would you seek to support academic library workers, particularly in light of legislation and other efforts that challenge equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts in higher education?***

**Cronk:** Academic library workers are critical advocates for access, yet we face growing challenges from restrictive legislation and institutional pressures. As ALA president, I would prioritize advocacy and resource development to support these workers, including peer mentoring to fight the isolation and low morale that have become pressing barriers to the health and wellbeing of academic libraries. I'm interested in considering how ACRL and ALA's advocacy guides and legislative agendas could be used to create toolkits tailored to academic librarians' needs. These resources would provide practical guidance on responding to harmful policies, advocating for academic freedom, and navigating these challenges.

Recent executive actions closely aligned with the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 document pose serious risks to intellectual freedom, research equity, and higher education. However, the fact [that nearly two-thirds of these actions mirror the proposals outlined in Project 2025](#) also provides us with a strategic advantage. We know what's coming, and we can prepare.

There are foundational issues affecting all library workers, such as wage equity and workplace well-being. With the right preparation and advocacy, we can succeed in countering these challenges while reinforcing the essential role libraries play as knowledge, preservation, learning, and growth infrastructure to communities. Academic library workers are indispensable to providing access and support for communities to research, and I will ensure ALA is fully equipped to express the importance of that work. **What connections can we make to support your success?**

**Jamison:** I will work with ALA leaders and members to

- increase collaboration across ALA divisions and affiliates to ramp up advocacy efforts aimed at protecting academic library workers and their institutions from harmful legislation;
- advocate for pro-library legislation; and
- enhance collaboration between ACRL, Library Research Round Table(LRRT), and other divisions to fund and support research that will provide valuable data for advocacy efforts. This will also give academic librarians more research opportunities that can lead to increased production of scholarship and tenure opportunities.

**McCauley:** It is vital to take the time to meet with academic library workers and librarians wherever I go and to provide encouragement and inspiration. I would provide virtual

meet-up opportunities and share with stakeholders and funders the stories of how these diverse academic library workers are making a difference in society. As a person of color, I will share my own story of feeling isolated when I entered into academic libraries—a time when there wasn't much diversity. Meeting other diverse library professionals and mentors who invited me in through ALA, Spectrum, and ACRL were critical, making me feel welcome and buoying my confidence that I could grow in the profession.

I look forward to representing all in the profession including from all backgrounds, abilities, ages, and places. We are enriched by the broad spectrum and experience of the membership.

## **Closing Statements**

### **Cronk: The Importance of Divisions and Financial Health**

Divisions are the backbone of ALA, providing professional homes, fostering collaboration, and advancing advocacy. My professional success is a testament to their transformative potential. They are not just an essential part of ALA; they are why I am so invested in its future.

ALA faces [critical financial challenges](#) that threaten its sustainability. The timing presents a challenge and opportunity with the external threats we are now addressing. However, I believe we can meet this moment with bold leadership, coalition-building, and fiscal responsibility. By strengthening ACRL and other divisions, we will ensure we all thrive.

I hope you'll honor me with the opportunity to serve as your advocate and spokesperson. You can trust me to listen and to communicate effectively, to make friends and allies, and to challenge detractors and misinformation. I will share the truth clearly, confidently, and loudly—when libraries lead, communities succeed. How would you like to work together?

### **Where do we start?**

Tell me at [Cronkthevote.com](http://Cronkthevote.com). 

# ACRL Members Running for ALA Council in the Spring 2025 Election

**T**he following ACRL members are either nominated or petition candidates for ALA councilor. ACRL members are encouraged to vote for these candidates to increase ACRL's voice in ALA affairs.

**Martha Anderson**, Organizational Development Director and Head of Digital Services, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville

**Maggie Farrell**, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

**Qiana Johnson**, Associate Dean of Libraries, Collections and Content Strategies, Dartmouth Libraries

**Lesliediana Jones**, Associate Director for Public Services, Harvard Law School Library

**Robin Kear**, Liaison Librarian, University of Pittsburgh

**Kristin Lansdown**, Librarian and Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Coordinator, DePaul University Library

**James G. Neal**, University Library Emeritus, New York, NY

**Jerome Offord**, Associate University Library and Chief Diversity Officer, Harvard University Library

**Anchalee Panigabutra-Roberts**, Head of Cataloging, University of Tennessee Libraries

**Brian E. C. Schottlaender**, Principal, Library Consulting

**Evviva Weinraub Lajoie**, Vice Provost, University at Buffalo

**Aaron Wilson**, Serials/Government Information Cataloging Librarian, University of Maryland ✉

**America's Health Rankings.** Access: <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/>.

The United Health Foundation has been publishing comparative health data in America's Health Rankings (AHR) since 1990. The site has a rich collection of in-depth health data topics for each state, which is compared and ranked nationally. This data will be valuable to those researching public health, policy making, and related fields.

While the homepage highlights a few general health topics via a national map, the "View Reports" and "Explore Data" are the true heart of this site. Three reports are released annually by the AHR: Annual Report, Senior Report, and Health of Women and Children Report. In addition, reports are provided about active duty and veteran US service members with special topic briefs such as Mental and Behavioral Health, Chronic Condition Care, and Preparing for Health Care Costs in Retirement. Reports also investigates health disparities by race, ethnicity, metropolitan status, gender, age, education, and income.

The section for "Explore Data" allows individuals to access the data behind the reports. Under "Explore Health Measures," for example, one can browse through all 280 unique measures from more than 80 publicly available data sources. The data measures are grouped into 23 categories that span a wide range of public health like access to care, air and water quality, behavioral health, climate, safety, economic resources, housing and transit, and additional measures for children, women, and older adults.

Also under "Explore Data," each state has a summary of strengths and weaknesses, including its ranking, top positive and negative impact factors, and the six general measures by which states are ranked. It is important to note that the two tables for Measures Impacting a State's Rank provide links to all measure impacts and measure rankings of a state; this is a quick way to access data about a state. The Measure table groups and ranks each impact factor into six main categories: Social and Economic Factors, Physical Environments, Clinical Care, Behaviors, Health Outcomes, and Annual Demographics. The related factors can also be displayed by clicking the plus sign to the right of each measure within the table.

One appreciated aspect of this site is its transparency. The model and ranking methodology are clearly identified as are the advisory committee members. With the rich wealth of information available, this site will strongly appeal to those researching health-related issues ranging from the social sciences to life science.—*John Repplinger, Willamette University, jrepplin@willamette.edu*

**Kennedy Center: Shakespeare.** Access: <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/collections/collections/theater/shakespeare/>.

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts was declared the United States' National Cultural Center in 1964. It currently acts as both a digital and physical center for artists across the nation to connect and collaborate. The Kennedy Center website houses a variety of resources for educators, including a robust Shakespeare collection. This webpage gives a closer look into Shakespeare's pivotal works and discusses historical and cultural effects of the author's work in modern history.

This webpage is a collection of resources tagged “Shakespeare” in the “Theatre” collection within the “Digital Resources Library,” which is a larger collection of educational materials. There are 32 collections, including topics such as “Classical Music,” “Puppetry,” “World Arts and Culture.” A resource may be tagged to appear in multiple collections, depending on its content. This crossover encourages educators to integrate interdisciplinary research and learning into their curriculum. Once a user clicks on the Shakespeare page, all links go directly to educational resources, with no further delineation. The simplicity of the organization and the depth of the materials provided on the webpage makes this an easy site to navigate, especially for busy educators looking for relevant teaching aids.

The works included in this repository fall into two categories. First, there are deep dives into Shakespeare’s plays. These in-depth pages may include synopses of the plays, discussion topics for classes, and videos of modern adaptations or other interpretations of the works. Second, there are video recordings of the Royal Shakespeare Company’s productions. Falling outside of these categories are two pages: “Shakespeare and Love: A Look at How the Bard Takes and Breaks Hearts,” a written discussion about how Shakespeare approaches the topic of love and romance in his plays and sonnets; and “José Limón Dance Company: The Moor’s Pavane,” a recorded demonstration with narration over a dance inspired by *The Moor’s Pavane*, which was the same Italian legend that influenced Shakespeare’s *Othello*.

Each written piece includes names of the article’s author, editor, and producer, along with the last time the piece was updated. There is room for expansion in the collection, but the page strongly stands as an apex for introductory Shakespeare education.—*Sydney Orason, University of Alabama at Birmingham, sorason@uab.edu*

### **Youth.gov.** Access: <https://youth.gov/>.

Youth.gov, a US government website previously entitled FindYouthInfo.gov, was created by the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs to “create, maintain, and strengthen effective youth programs.” The intended audience is individuals or organizations that are involved in creating, administering, and funding youth programs in their communities.

The website is designed to provide information about engaging with youth, implementing evidence-based programs, and finding funding and other resources. Youth.gov provides a blend of youth-related news, facts on thirty youth topics, funding information, tools to locate federal resources and programs, guides for collaboration, and developing skills for providing evidence-based outcomes. Youth.gov meets users at a range of experience levels and provides information on early childhood through high school/young adult.

Visitors to Youth.gov will find the page to be visually appealing and easily navigated. Content is well-organized under the menu hamburger button on the top of each page. Alternatively, visitors can conduct a keyword search. Opportunities for engagement are evident in links to social media, availability of digital badges, and an icon for sharing of content. While the website is text-heavy, there are links to videos, podcasts, and other interactive resources on third party websites. The sheer amount of information available may be overwhelming. For instance, when selecting the topic “Mental Health,” there are 14 subcategories from which to choose as well as 17 “Other Resources on this Topic.” Making use of the menu feature is helpful in focusing on the content that is most relevant for each visitor.

Youth.gov provides references for the information provided, although these are not always the most current, such as providing references ranging from 2004 to 2011 for mental health.

Likewise, the website does not provide information on when it was last updated, and the discontinued Twitter bird icon is still present on the page's footer. However, announcements on the homepage are timely, suggesting regular updating. Unfortunately, the website is only available in English, which is disappointing in its lack of inclusivity and accessibility.

Youth.gov is a robust resource that will be useful in school, public, and academic libraries as both a source of information about youth and a tool to facilitate community youth programs. However, at the time of publication, the website has gone offline.—*Dawn Behrend, Lenoir-Rhyne University, dawn.behrend@lr.edu* 