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Association of College & Research Libraries



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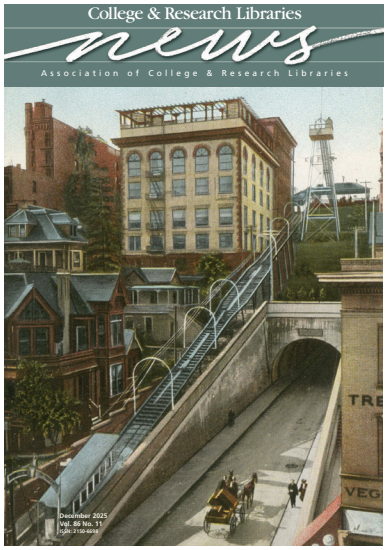
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This month's cover features a postcard of Angel's Flight and Elk Building, Los Angeles, CA, circa 1901-1910. The Angels Flight Railway began operating in 1901. Located at 3rd and Hill Streets in downtown Los Angeles, it used a funicular system of two counterbalanced cars moving up and down parallel tracks. The cars were originally painted white but were repainted to black and orange in 1930. In 1959, Angels Flight was slated for demolition as part of the Bunker Hill Urban Renewal Project, but community support succeeded in delaying the dismantling until 1969. Restoration and reconstruction efforts began in 1995.

The image is part of the Werner von Boltenstern Postcard Collection at Loyola Marymount University. The collection features a selection of postcards that provide a considerable breadth of coverage of California. Learn more at https://digitalcollections.lmu.edu/collections/werner-von-boltenstern-postcard-collection.

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**ACRL Board of Directors:** President—Brad L. Warren; vice-president/president-elect—Alexia Hudson-Ward; past-president—Leo S. Lo; Budget & Finance Committee chair—Joe Mocnik; councilor—Millie Gonzalez; directors-at-large—Tarida Anantachai, Kimberley Bugg, Walter Butler, Amy Dye-Reeves, Andrea M. Falcone, Carrie Forbes, Rachel M. Minkin, Rebecca Miller Waltz; ACRL Executive Director—Teresa Anderson

## Nominations Sought for ACRL Board of Directors

Don't be shy! Your participation matters, and we invite you to be a part of shaping the future of ACRL. The ACRL Leadership Recruitment and Nomination Committee (LRNC) strongly encourages members to nominate themselves or others to run for the position of ACRL vice president/president-elect and director-at-large in the 2027 elections. We seek board members who can offer visionary leadership and a broad perspective on librarianship. It is not a requirement that members of the Board be library directors or deans. The deadline for nominations is February 15, 2026. To nominate an individual or to self-nominate, please submit the nomination form available at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/acrlboardnominations.

The LRNC will request a curriculum vitae and/or a statement of interest from selected individuals before developing a slate of candidates. If you have any questions about the nominating or election process, please feel free to contact LRNC Chair Kim Copenhaver at kimberly.copenhaver@yale.edu.

## PALNI, PALCI, IOI Partner to Strengthen Hyku

The Private Academic Library Network of Indiana (PALNI) and the Partnership for Academic Library Collaboration and Innovation (PALCI) have announced a new partnership with Invest in Open Infrastructure (IOI) to strengthen the long-term sustainability of Hyku, the open-source digital repository platform. Through this project, the Hyku for Consortia team—along with key stakeholders in the Samvera Hyku Community and IOI—will support the development of a coinvestment and community decision-making model designed to ensure the Hyku platform remains robust, community-driven, and financially sustainable.

Hyku enables libraries, archives, and cultural institutions to manage, preserve, and provide access to digital collections—from research outputs to archival materials—without relying on commercial systems. Initially developed and advanced through grant funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), Hyku for Consortia has provided libraries with an affordable, flexible repository option while cultivating a strong collaborative community. This partnership with IOI marks the next step in Hyku's evolution, transitioning from grant funding and siloed development streams to a sustainable, community-focused coinvestment and decision-making model. For progress updates, visit the Hyku for Consortia website at https://hykuforconsortia.palni.org.

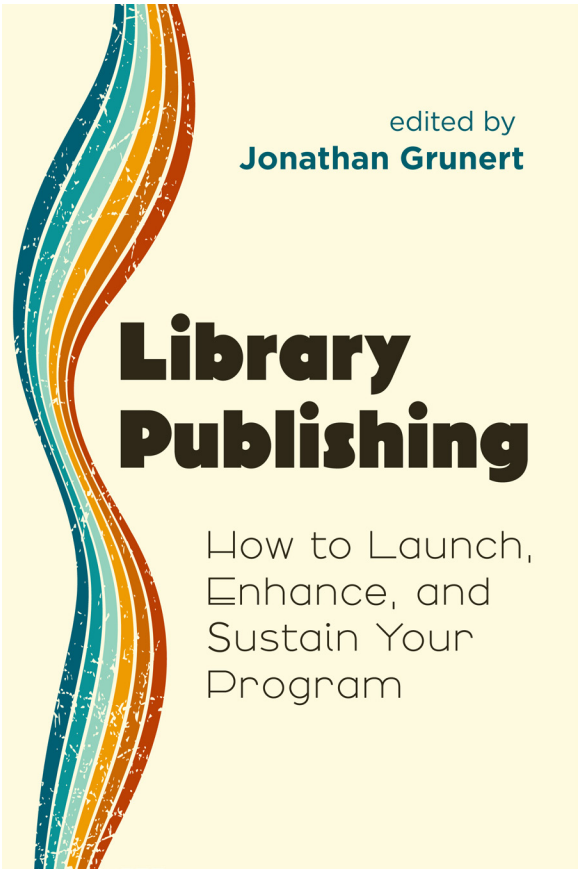
## AI Competencies for Academic Library Workers

The ACRL Board of Directors approved a new AI Competencies for Academic Library Workers at its October 3, 2025, virtual meeting. The document expands on the broad definition of artificial intelligence (AI) literacy, tailoring it into a comprehensive, library-specific set of competencies applicable to academic library workers. It is meant to serve as a guiding framework for the creation of training programs and as a foundation for communities of librarians to develop their own frameworks. Given the diversity of roles and job duties among academic library workers, it is not possible to create a set of competencies that

apply uniformly. Therefore, individuals, institutions, and others who use the competencies are encouraged to adapt them to specific job functions, responsibilities, or organizational contexts. The new AI Competencies for Academic Library Workers is freely available in the Standards, Guidelines, and Frameworks section of the ACRL website at https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ai.

## New from ACRL – Library Publishing: How to Launch, Enhance, and Sustain Your Program

ACRL announces the publication of *Library Publishing: How to Launch, Enhance, and Sustain Your Program,* edited by Jonathan Grunert, offering perspectives from diverse publishing programs, processes, and challenges that can help you scale content to meet your campus's needs.




Shifting landscapes of academic publishing, open-access initiatives, transformative agreements, and questionable scholarly publishing practices have all contributed to an evolution in the role libraries play within academic institutions and the development of many library publishing programs.

In three parts—Launching, Enhancing, and Sustaining a Library Publishing Program—*Library Publishing* provides library workers and administrators with several considerations for creating a program, as well as a glossary of terms and ways to choose the right technologies, incorporate artificial intelligence, leverage consortia, craft contracts, and more. Chapters offer strategies for approaching the labor involved in library publishing, much of it unseen and requiring new expertise.

Chapter authors—from instruction librarians to dedicated scholarly communication and publishing librarians to teaching and research faculty—offer ways and ideas for campus collaborations and using publishing to enhance student success. In this diversity of thought, library publishing is not a monolith; it is a process by which change can be affected. *Library Publishing* can help you begin and sustain change.

*Library Publishing: How to Launch, Enhance, and Sustain Your Program* is available for purchase in print through the ALA Online Store and Amazon.com; via EBSCO, ProQuest, and other ebook vendors; and by telephone order at (866) 746-7252 in the United States or (770) 442-8633 for international customers. This book is also available as an open access edition.

## University of North Texas Named Best Federal Depository Website

The US Government Publishing Office (GPO) honors University of North Texas (UNT) Libraries for having the best website in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP)

for 2025. This is the third library to ever receive the award, which was created to recognize creativity and the ways libraries are providing easy access to federal government information on their websites. The library has digitized many federal government documents and archived web pages that might otherwise have been lost and made them accessible to the public on its sleek and easy-to-navigate website. UNT Libraries serves as a digital preservation steward with GPO. Through this commitment, the library retains and make accessible at no fee the digital resources they hold that are in scope of the National Collection. The UNT Digital Library currently preserves and provides access to The Government Accountability Office Reports Collection, Government Comics, Government Documents A to Z Digitization Project, World War II Newsmaps, and more. The UNT Libraries also hosts the CyberCemetery, an archive of Government websites that have ceased operation. The website is available at https://library.unt.edu/sycamore/collections/government-documents/.

## Tech Bits . . .

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

Open Dyslexic is a free, open-source typeface designed to increase readability for people with dyslexia. It was created by a reader with dyslexia based on research they share on the Open Dyslexic website. Here at the University of Texas Libraries, our tech team installed it as a Chrome extension and system font on all our public computers. Users can easily convert most text on any webpage into the OpenDyslexic typeface without intervention from staff. More information about the installation at the UT Libraries is available on our OpenDyslexic LibGuide at https://guides.lib.utexas.edu/c.php?g=1327395.

*— Michele Ostrow, University of Texas*

**Open Dyslexic**
**https://opendyslexic.org/**

## ACRL Board of Directors Authorizes Sale of Choice Property

During an executive session at its October 3, 2025, fall virtual meeting, the ACRL Board of Directors unanimously approved a recommendation that the ALA Executive Board authorize Dina Tsourdinis, chief financial officer, and Denise Moritz, director of financial reporting and compliance, to negotiate the sale of the Choice condominium located in Middletown, Connecticut. The unit in the Liberty Square commercial property in downtown Middletown was purchased by ALA, ACRL, and Choice in 2008.

The Board also approved a recommendation that ACRL Executive Director Teresa Anderson be included in all actions, processes, and next steps regarding the sale of the property. The ALA Executive Board approved the sale of the Choice property, pending the approval of the ACRL Board of Directors, at its meeting in early October 2025. These actions were taken to align resources with current business needs.

Stephanie Reyes and Magaly Salas

# The Post-Graduation Transition

## Building Relationships with Faculty in a World with Unspoken Rules

Academic 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 discusses the transition from graduate student to librarian, building relationships, and the unspoken rules that shape libraries. — *Dustin Fife, series editor*

**Stephanie Reyes (SR)**: The transition from graduate school to a full-time, tenure-track position can be daunting. There is especially a knowledge gap between being a student to becoming a teacher or a "full-fledged" librarian. Now I added quotations to "full-fledged" because I don't feel fully fledged and it seems most of my colleagues that I do work with are consistently updating their methods of teaching, reference, and administrative duties. Every academic year is different, with new staff, faculty, and students coming in. Being in an academic career, we will always feel like students and be students to some extent. While librarianship is an engaging career, it relies on consistently learning, changing expectations, navigating academic cultures, and making sure I don't feel rude by saying "no" to people who want me to take on roles outside of my duties but detrimental to annual reviews and tenure and promotion files.

I am going into my second year of my full-time library career, and it's challenging to not to feel imposter syndrome, especially as a woman of color. I feel that there is a consistent expectation I put on myself to battle this "imposter" in me to do more, say "yes," and brush off the microaggressions because if I don't, then I will fall into the hole of needing to do more or my job is in jeopardy. And for most of us this can be the case, especially in institutions where the administration may not value their library and its services. Throughout my first year as a librarian, all my senses were telling me I was missing "something," and it took me a while to realize that that something was understanding the unspoken rules, interactions, and respectability culture. Going into academia from being a student to being faculty, there is a culture shock.

Magaly, how did you manage the transition from student to full-time librarian, and what are some challenges or surprises that you encountered?

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**Magaly Salas (MS)**: Stephanie, the transition from student to full-time librarian was a bit unsettling, especially as a first-generation woman of color. I had no idea what was going on or what I was doing. I had just gotten used to graduate school and learning how to navigate that space, where I was often the only one who looked like me when, within a couple of months, I was thrown into being a professional librarian—it felt like I was just starting over. I entered a space where I had to learn how to navigate new, unspoken hierarchies and expectations. I also experienced a new kind of imposter syndrome, feeling unprepared for my role and the new responsibilities.

However, something that made a real difference was having a woman of color as a supervisor. She created an environment where I felt comfortable approaching her with questions, and she provided a thorough onboarding process that helped me avoid failure. Although my fears and feelings of imposter syndrome did not disappear with her support, it did give me a way not to be afraid to ask for help. That was the most significant support. I moved to a new city for my first job. I left my family and community, so having at least one person to ask for guidance made all the difference.

Stephanie, is there anything you wish you had when you began your job?

**SR:** You expressed a good point that management makes a major difference for an early career position. Having a supervisor that is cognizant that we are new to the system and navigating a career where most of the work is learned on the job and through experience. The director of my library continues to reiterate that onboarding takes a year, and with that mindset, I think I also felt comfortable knowing that it takes a year to understand campus culture, faculty governance, and understanding how campus works in terms of who to go to, what is prioritized, and what isn't—if not longer. I am fortunate that I work at an institution where my colleagues have been my mentors and teachers throughout my first couple of years.

Oh, I wish I had patience! Throughout my career I've worked in positions where I could physically and immediately see the effects of my work. In my position now as an academic librarian, I've heard many say it takes a few years to actually get to know your liaison faculty, or understand how the curriculum works, or get to know most of the offices and departments on campus. I have experienced all of these and also understand that projects and programs may take a year to come to fruition, and that's something I wasn't quite prepared for. Having to plan an academic year in advance or semesters in advance is something new to me.

Also, another thing I wish I had were networking skills. I still get the "ick" with the word *networking* since I worked in a corporate setting before librarianship, so it doesn't have the best connotation for me. Understanding how to communicate with faculty was a big learning curve for me! Usually their schedules are different from mine as a 9 to 5 worker. Also understanding that they have highs and lows to the semester, and also understanding when they're understaffed they may have overloads, and being cognizant of this as a liaison librarian. Learning to be tuned in and reading the room has been a struggle.

**MS:** Stephanie, I understand entirely what you mean about working with faculty. As librarians, we were not trained to engage in conversations or establish relationships with faculty. Every faculty member is different, and one size does not fit all. One thing I have noticed is that before even considering a collaboration with faculty, I need to explain to them what I do as a librarian. In my experience, most faculty members are unaware of what I do or hold misconceptions about my job. I first need to help them understand that my role extends beyond shelving books and that I bring my librarian expertise to the table, helping with

information literacy instruction. Another thing that makes it challenging to create partnerships with faculty is the lack of institutional support. If faculty members are not encouraged to build relationships with librarians, there is little reason for them to do so. I am a librarian and faculty member, and I also face this problem where faculty members do not see the value of librarian–faculty collaboration.

**SR:** Magaly, you bring up a good point regarding institutional support. I think that my outreach toward faculty wouldn't be half as successful if we weren't embedded within the first-year seminar curriculum. Being embedded within the first-year seminar curriculum helps with collaborating with faculty and students. Most faculty get to know me through the required information literacy session that their course is required to schedule with a librarian. Although the next challenge I face is continuing to build that relationship beyond our required partnership. Having a boss that encourages me to attend events has helped, but sometimes it can be a bit difficult to "upsell" my services to faculty and continuously having to advocate that information literacy can help with those projects and assignments they see their student's struggle with. I guess it's difficult to reach faculty who don't already see the value of library services beyond database searching.

**MS**: Thank you, Stephanie. I appreciate your mention of building partnerships beyond what is required. That is also my next focus. As a Student Success librarian, supporting students in innovative ways by developing programs that enhance learning and research is very important to me. I especially want to improve my understanding of how to better assist students from diverse backgrounds, particularly transfer and first-generation students.

**SR:** Yes! Supporting students is definitely something that my colleagues have stressed as a way to market my skills to faculty. The "help me, help you." Something that I am definitely working on this year is just chatting with faculty regarding how students would benefit from researching skills and topic development with info literacy sessions. As well as being a good listener has helped me determine what faculty find challenging within their courses regarding their students' work. I'm hoping to continue using this strategy throughout the academic year. My hope is that by comparing how IL can be used to enhance student learning with the challenges faculty are facing, then they will be able to view my skills as necessary and valuable.

Christine Juedes

# What Is a "Real Librarian"?

## Considering the Distinction

In a recent conversation with a former library colleague, she enthusiastically shared about her return to school to earn her MLIS so that she could be a "real librarian." I was certainly excited and encouraged her, but the phrase she used caught my attention. I have heard "real librarian" used on multiple occasions, and although I understood the intended meaning, it bothered me and caused me to consider: What is a "real librarian"?

The prevailing viewpoint seems to be that a "real librarian" is someone who has the proper education and certification, which in our current context is the MLIS, MLS, or MSLS. In my home state of California, certificated teacher librarians have the specialized Teacher Librarian Services Credential. In school libraries, a distinction is made between teacher librarians and library assistants, specialists, or technicians, commonly referred to as *paraprofessionals*. In academic libraries, a clear distinction is made between *librarians* and *library staff*. The unspoken difference is that some possess the specified educational degree or certification, while others do not, making them not quite librarians.

But is this accurate? Should education or certification be the defining factor for being a "real librarian," or should it encompass more? Should we also consider function and work?

Before recently joining academia, I worked in public and school libraries, where the vast majority of my colleagues did not have a library-specific degree or certification. This was largely due to cutbacks, resulting in many part-time and entry-level positions. In the small and mid-sized public libraries where I worked, there was one, maybe two, staff members with an MLIS, not including myself once I earned my degree. According to the 2022–23 California Public Library Statistics, about 28 percent of public library full-time employees have an MLIS.[1] In the school district where I worked, there were no certificated teacher librarians at all for its forty schools. Districts and states vary, but in California, it is not uncommon to have just one certificated librarian for an entire district. According to the California Department of Education's 2022–23 Annual School Library Evaluation, only 19 percent of school libraries have a teacher librarian or a qualified certificated librarian working at least part-time.[2] Academic libraries have more degreed librarians, but usually even more staff, who, along with student workers, are regularly the first to engage and assist patrons and are essential to daily library operations. This means that most patrons are being served by library workers who do not possess the specified degree or certification, and a good portion of library work is being done by them.

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Which causes me to ask: Are all these people who serve our patrons and students not librarians? The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a *librarian* as "the keeper or custodian of a library."[3] Those of us in the profession will likely argue that it is so much more, but the broadness of the definition is worth considering. In his article about information professionals without MLIS degrees, William L. Jenkins points out that the first librarians of the ancient world in Alexandria had training in different fields, many of them poets, and what made "them worthy of service was their intelligence, management skills, cataloging and search talents, and incredible memories."[4] In other words, it was based more on skill and function than specific training or education.

My school and public library colleagues were answering reference questions, providing reader advisory, giving presentations, implementing programs, performing tech services, and daily engaging patrons in myriad ways. They were indeed keepers of the library, especially the solo school library workers. It became a little inside joke with my school colleagues that we were "assistants" because the librarian we were supposedly assisting never showed up. Often, to patrons interacting with library workers, they are librarians. Children, especially, see no distinction and invariably call whoever is working and helping them in a library a librarian.

What makes a librarian a librarian? Certification, function, or both? Do the professionals within the field or patrons determine who a librarian is? Or both? If a library specialist is providing essential, daily library and patron services, could they be considered a librarian by merit of their function and work? What library work encompasses is indeed broad and continuously changing, varies widely depending on the context, and is often learned on the job rather than in the classroom.

I confess that my own vision of a "real librarian" was grounded in academia, perhaps because academic librarians are generally more respected and often associated with the profession. I wanted to be a "real librarian" and pictured working in higher education as its fulfillment. Now that I am on the other side as a university associate librarian, I have realized that my desire to be a "real librarian" was limited and even somewhat skewed.

To be sure, there is great value in certification and a library-specific degree. The training and knowledge are invaluable and necessary for libraries to thrive. Those who have put in the work and effort to obtain certification or a degree should be given proper respect and corresponding greater and specialized responsibilities and duties. Studies have shown how beneficial certificated librarians are to students.[5] Yet perhaps we need not exclude those without certification who are doing the work to ensure due respect for those who do have it. Maybe, in a way, they merit acknowledgement even more because they do not receive equal respect for "keeping" the library.

What does this mean? Perhaps a change in our language or terminology. Academic librarians have often set the precedent and have great influence in the field. Libraries at their best are wonderfully inclusive, so perhaps this should extend to, and somehow ensure, that those performing librarian functions do not feel as though they are not "real librarians." After all, they almost certainly are to their patrons.

In response to my dear colleague starting the MLIS journey, knowing how well she serves and is loved by the students in the library, how could I not say, "You *are* a real librarian"?

## Notes

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2. Statistics About California School Libraries – School Libraries (CA Dept of Education), "Statistics about California School Libraries," November 1, 2024, https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/lb/schoollibrstats08.asp#staffingstatistics.

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Megan Oakleaf and Becky Croxon

# From Subjects to Partners

## Centering Participants in Library Assessment

Making Assessment Matter is a four-part *C&RL News* series focused on maximizing the impact of academic library assessment. This second article focuses on enabling librarians to use the results of their assessment projects. Upcoming topics will explore how to anticipate potential pathways for decision making and action to better stimulate follow-through and design communications that present compelling results to key decision makers—providing evidence that drives meaningful change and encourages ongoing investment and engagement in assessment for continuous improvement. Together, the series equips librarians to use assessment to drive meaningful change.

## Introduction

Academic library assessment involves expertise, time, effort, and a commitment to reflection and change. However, despite librarians' best intentions, many library assessment projects fail to lead to informed decisions or drive meaningful improvements that benefit library stakeholders. At its most impactful, assessment is not something done ***to*** students, faculty, or other library constituents but rather ***with*** them. When we center the individuals representing the focus of a library assessment as participants in the process, we shift assessment from a detached evaluative exercise to a collaborative endeavor. Assessments conducted in partnership are more likely to yield transformative insights and foster positive change than assessments carried out in isolation.

Three key strategies are essential to centering assessment "subjects" as participants and increasing the likelihood of library assessments yielding beneficial results.

## 1. Determine Who to Include

When undertaking an assessment project, begin with an inventory of individuals and/or representatives of groups to include in their project planning. Casting a wide net to **include the voices of all those affected** (both external and internal to the library) is essential from the initial stages of a project (see Figure 1). Indeed, waiting to include these viewpoints can result in poorly framed user stories, research questions, hypotheses, or problem statements; methodological choices that may not "fit" the needs of project participants; or assumptions that undermine the validity of the approach or eventual results.[1] Avoiding these negative outcomes forms part of the rationale for "engag[ing] diverse stakeholders ... in all phases of assessment."[2] In addition, involving assessment participants as **partners**, not only as **subjects**, can result in

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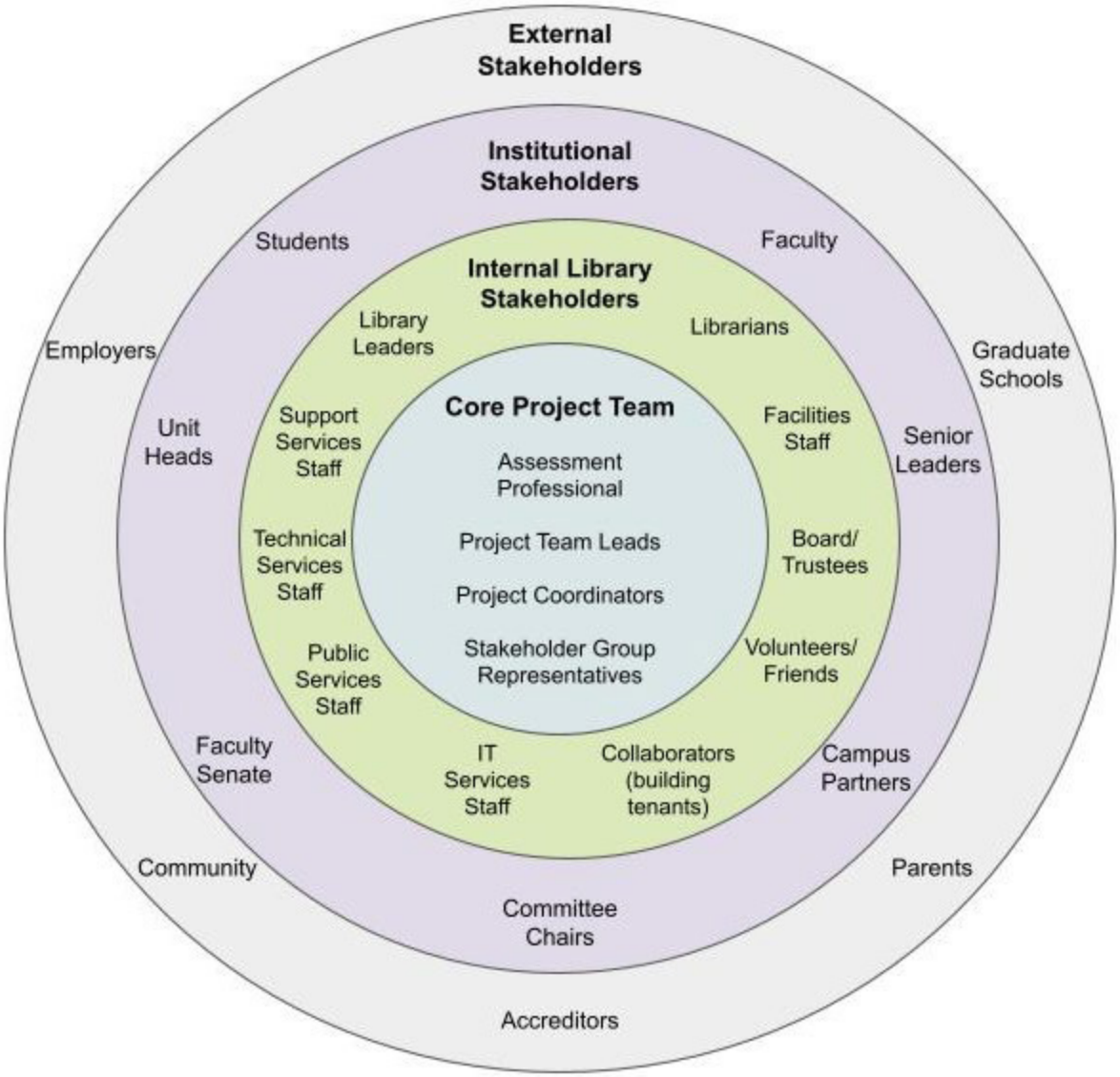



Figure 1. Library Stakeholders

immediate and direct benefits to the participants and the populations they represent; ensure that the assessment serves the participant community by increasing awareness of problems and commitment to solutions; establish long-term relationships with participant communities; and forge a continuous communication loop that can lead to beneficial changes over time.[3]

A number of questions[4] can help you identify participants to include, such as:

- What **perspectives**, **experiences**, or **mindsets** should be represented?
- What **skills** or **abilities** are needed?
- What **roles** should be included?
- Who will be **affected** by the project?
- Who might serve as **leaders** representing the interests of a group or community?
- Who could be included that is **not among the "usual"** people called upon for input?

Other questions you might ask in considering library coworkers to involve include:

- What **positions** at what **levels** can contribute to the project?
- What job responsibilities might **align** with or inform the project?
- What job responsibilities might **conflict** with the project?

Finally, consider institutional coworkers to engage by asking:

- Who else at the institution has **shared interests** about, **influence** with, or **responsibility** for the proposed assessment topics or participants?
- Who else at the institution might be able to **partner** in the framing, design, analysis, dissemination, or resulting actions of the assessment project?

In responding to these thought prompts, think broadly. Partnership lists will likely include the beneficiaries of the assessment (for example, students if you are assessing a student-centered service); faculty or staff who may help implement recommendations or be affected by changes in services; administrators who guide organizational decision making and control resources; and external partners who may have a stake in the outcomes.

## 2. Center Stakeholder Values

Once a diverse group of voices is convened to inform an assessment project, an essential next step is to **surface the core drivers** for each partner constituency. In some cases, the values motivating an assessment project participant might be easy to assume: Students value learning, development, professional/personal/social advancement, affordability, and so on; senior leaders might be moved by student retention, institutional rankings, disruption avoidance, or fiscal responsibility; librarians might be inspired by the opportunity to educate and advocate for students, stay abreast of technological advancements, or avoid additional duties that are not demonstrated to be effective. Although partners are often eager to share logistical needs, past experiences, or concerns related to an assessment project, intentionally and thoughtfully surfacing the deeper values that shape their engagement is essential for guiding an effective and actionable assessment project.

Organizing information about project partners in a "stakeholder register" is an efficient and effective way to ensure your partner needs and interests are centered throughout the project. Stakeholder registers list the individuals and groups identified by the question-asking process outlined above and typically include the **contact information**, **roles and responsibilities**, levels of **influence and interest**, **sentiment and expectations**, **values**, and **potential impact** on the project. A stakeholder register also serves as a tool to help you orient stakeholders toward the collective goals of the assessment, reinforcing that the values guiding the project should represent the full team, not just the dominant voices or institutional priorities. Taking this approach ensures the project is grounded in shared values, builds alignment and trust, and positions the project to generate meaningful and actionable insights. Table 1 illustrates a sample stakeholder register, showing how different groups contribute to and are affected by the project. When shared with all partners, the register can help you promote transparency, accountability, and a values-driven approach that is responsive to the communities the assessment aims to serve.

## 3. Plan for Ongoing Engagement

Planning for stakeholder engagement is an often overlooked aspect of assessment work—not identifying just ***whom*** to involve but also ***how*** and ***when***. Too often, engagement happens reactively, triggered by a decision point or a roadblock. But meaningful engagement doesn't happen by chance; it happens because we plan for it.

**Table 1. Sample Stakeholder Register**

| Stakeholder | Contact Information | Roles and Responsibilities | Influence and Interest | Sentiment and Expectations | Values | Potential Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assessment Project Team | Email/phone | Conduct the assessment project. | High | Successful project with actionable results | Useful results to improve library and student engagement | Medium |
| Library Leaders | Email/phone | Champion the project, communicate with senior institutional leadership | High | Increased ability to advocate for library services and resources | Useful results enabling demonstration of library contributions to institution | High |
| Public Services Staff | Email/phone | Communicate and encourage student participation in the project | Medium | Low effort, useful recommendations upon completion | Productive and positive engagement with user | Low |
| Institutional Research Staff | Email/phone | Collaborative data analysis, consulting on statistical tests | Medium | Efficient partnership, mutually useful results | Partnership in developing new insights about student success | Medium |
| Students | Email/phone | Participate in framing, responding to, and reacting to project recommendations | High | Being heard, positive change in status, circumstances, opportunities | Increased access, sense of belonging, ability to complete academic work successfully | High |
| Faculty | Email/phone | Encourage student participation in the project | Medium | Low effort, useful improvements upon completion | Improved student work | Low |
| Senior Leaders (president, provost) | Email/phone | Advocate for update of project recommendations across institution | High | Demonstration of value to institutional priorities | Utility for improving institutional benchmarks | High |

At the onset of your assessment project, take time to map out a communication strategy that outlines how stakeholders will be engaged throughout the project.[5] This plan is distinct from how you'll communicate results at the end of the project (which will be covered in the fourth article of the series). Here the focus is on ***ongoing engagement***, the kind that builds trust, fosters collaboration, and ensures your project stays aligned with stakeholder needs.

Once you've identified your core project team—the individuals who will do the heavy lifting—and your partners, consider who needs to be kept in the loop. Not everyone needs to be informed of every detail, but transparency in communication builds trust, buy-in, and engagement. Some partners may benefit from regular updates, others may need to weigh in at key moments, and some may simply appreciate being informed.

A project communication plan, sometimes called a **stakeholder communication matrix**, can clarify how, when, and what information is shared, as illustrated in Table 2. This plan

**Table 2. Sample Stakeholder Communication Matrix**

| Stakeholder | Role/Interest | Information Needs | Communication Methods | Frequency | Owner |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Library Leaders | Strategic decision-makers | Project goals, progress, key findings | Executive summary, email | Monthly | Assessment Lead |
| Public Services Staff | Service delivery | Survey results, feedback themes | Infographics, team meetings | Monthly | Communications Officer |
| Institutional Research Staff | Data alignment & support | Data definitions, integration points | Email, working sessions | As needed | Data Liaison |
| Students | End users of library services | Summary of findings, opportunities to engage | Email, posters, website | Once per semester | Outreach Coordinator |
| Faculty | Instruction & research support | Service impact, usage trends, opportunities | Department meetings, newsletters | Once per semester | Outeach Coordinator |
| Senior Leaders (president, provost) | Institutional oversight, ROI, institutional priorities | Strategic alignment, outcomes, resource needs | Briefings, executive summary | Quarterly | Library leader (e.g., Dean) |
| External Consultants | Methodological expertise | Scope, deliver-ables, timelines | Email, project portal | As needed | Project Manager |

builds on the stakeholder register and typically outlines each stakeholder's **role/interest**, **information needs**, preferred **communication methods**, **frequency of updates**, and **who is responsible** for the communication. For example, strategic decision makers like library leadership may need monthly executive summaries, while frontline employees may benefit from information shared during team meetings. Students and faculty may be engaged through periodic communications via email or the library website, while institutional research staff may be looped in as needed through working sessions or project portals.

To make engagement meaningful, consider building in engagement checkpoints or moments when you pause to reflect on stakeholder input and adjust course if needed. These checkpoints can help ensure that stakeholder voices are not only heard but also acted upon.

Remember: Communication isn't just about broadcasting; it's about **listening**. Make sure your communication plan includes the following:

- Clear channels for feedback, such as surveys, meetings, or informal conversations
- A designated person or team to receive and act on feedback
- A process to close the loop and let stakeholders know how their input informed decisions and shaped the project

In short, if you want stakeholder engagement to happen, you have to ***plan*** for it and then ***work*** **your plan**. It's not just good project management; it's good relationship building.

## Conclusion

Effective library assessment is not just about collecting, analyzing, and reporting on data—it's about building relationships, fostering collaboration, and centering the voices of those

most impacted. By engaging stakeholders as partners from the beginning, surfacing their values, and planning for ongoing communication and feedback, library assessment professionals can ensure their projects are meaningful and actionable. Early and inclusive planning helps avoid missteps and strengthens the commitment to solutions. Intentional communication keeps stakeholders informed, involved, and invested throughout the process.

As libraries continue to evolve, so too must our approaches to assessment. Partner engagement is not a checkbox; it's a mindset—one that positions assessment as a collaborative process. When approached this way, assessment fosters shared understanding, strengthens decision making, and supports continuous learning and improvement. Ultimately, an assessment that is done ***with*** participants rather than ***to*** them is far more likely to lead to transformative understanding and positive change. The next article in the series will highlight ways that anticipating potential pathways for decision making and action can better stimulate follow-through.

## Notes

1. Megan Oakleaf and Becky Croxton, "Start at the End: Strategies for Actionable Assessment Results," *College and Research Libraries News* 86, no. 9 (2025): 382–85, https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.86.9.%25p.

2. Association of College & Research Libraries, "Proficiencies for Assessment in Academic Libraries," revised June 2023, https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/assessment_proficiencies.

3. Budd L. Hall, "Breaking the Monopoly of Knowledge: Research Methods, Participation and Development," in *Adult Learning: A Design for Action: A Comprehensive International Survey*, ed. Budd L. Hall and J.R. Kidd (Elsevier Ltd., 1978), 155–68, https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-022245-5.50021-9.

4. Barbara Allan, "The Project Life Cycle and Project Analysis," in *Project Management: Tools and Techniques for Today's ILS Professional* (Facet, 2004), 17–36.

5. Barbara Allan, "Planning the Project," in *Project Management: Tools and Techniques for Today's ILS Professional* (Facet, 2004), 37–60.

# Make a Difference - Connect, Contribute, Collaborate

Volunteer for Division and Section Committees and Editorial Boards

What would ACRL do without, *You*? Really! We are excited to extend this opportunity for you to expand your professional network, help shape ACRL by advancing its strategic plan, commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and influence the direction of academic and research librarianship. Serving on a committee or an editorial board is a fantastic way to become involved and make an impact on the profession.

Are you ready to be considered for an opportunity to advance learning and transform scholarship through a committee appointment? I invite you to volunteer, https://www.ala.org/acrl/membership/volunteer/volunteer to serve on a 2026-27 division or section committee. Face-to-face attendance at conferences is **not** required, and committee work can be completed virtually throughout the year. I have found my own participation as a volunteer with ACRL to be personally and professionally rewarding, and I look forward to hearing from you!

ACRL seeks to offer appointments to volunteers who are genuinely interested in leadership and service opportunities as we continue to build diverse and inclusive communities in the Association. To support that effort and advance ACRL's Core Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, https://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/strategicplan/stratplan, we continue to include optional demographic questions on the volunteer form as we have since 2017. "The Association will acknowledge and address historical racial inequities; challenge oppressive systems within academic libraries; value different ways of knowing; and identify and work to eliminate barriers to equitable services, spaces, resources, and scholarship."

Thank you for volunteering to contribute your time and expertise to ACRL! Our association relies on the time and energy of our member volunteers, and we value the talent they invest in accomplishing the work of the Association.

Thank you,
Alexia Hudson-Ward
ACRL Vice-President/President-Elect

## The Rewards of Volunteering

Volunteering offers many benefits and opportunities. You can:

- connect with others in the profession who are passionate and committed to academic librarianship,
- learn from those who share similar professional concerns and interests,
- network with information professionals in higher education,

- become part of a community of academic and research librarians,
- gain insights into the profession,
- enhance your leadership abilities through consensus building and project management,
- discover new ways to work,
- expand your awareness and understanding of the value of academic libraries in higher education,
- influence and advance the work of the association and the profession, and
- promote excellence within the profession.

## The Appointment Process

Appointments are made at the division and section levels, and through the editorial board process (see editorial board section below). Section vice-chairs are responsible for committee appointments for the year they will serve as chair. The ACRL vice-president is responsible for committee appointments at the division level for the year they serve as president. The ACRL Appointments Committee assists the vice-president in an advisory capacity. Division-level committees are created to conduct the work of the Board, and each committee crafts an annual work plan in consultation with their Board and Staff liaisons to accomplish their charged activities and responsibilities.

Current committee members whose terms conclude at the 2026 ALA Annual Conference should submit a **new** volunteer form to be considered for re-appointment. The online volunteer form closes February 28, 2026, and most committee appointment offers will be sent by May 2026.

Members of all ACRL committees, task forces, and similar bodies are expected to fully participate in the work of the group. Please note that face-to-face attendance at conferences is **not** required and committee work can be completed virtually throughout the year.

## Core Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

ACRL has made a Core Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, https://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/strategicplan/stratplan. Appointments should seek to offer leadership and service opportunities to members with this commitment in mind. Underrepresented colleagues should be offered opportunities wherever possible, in order to help ACRL acknowledge and address historical racial inequities; challenge oppressive systems within academic libraries; value different ways of knowing; and identify and work to eliminate barriers to equitable services, spaces, resources, and scholarship.

## Factors Influencing Appointments

These guidelines, developed by a Board Working Group, are intended to help ACRL members understand which priorities are considered in appointing members to volunteer positions at the division level. These guidelines are not intended to serve as a strict rubric. Generally, the vice-president, Appointments Committee, and section vice-chairs should approach appointments with a holistic perspective, seeking overall balance in service to the association's goals and priorities.

- Evidence of prospective committee member's interest and expertise.
- Seek geographic diversity on committees and sections. This can include international representation, and/or it can include representation from different regions of the United States.

- Seek diversity in types of institutions represented on committees and sections. Candidates from public, private, and non-educational (research) institutions, consortia, and other institutions should be included, as well as candidates from community colleges, four-year college and universities, and research and doctoral universities. Historically, community college representation is particularly needed in order to ensure equitable representation for colleagues employed in community colleges.
- Consider diversity in roles and duties represented on committees and sections. Candidates from all areas of academic and research librarianship should be considered for appointment, although in some cases it may be important to appoint candidates with particular expertise to carry out particular duties.
- Seek to balance seniority, experience, and tenure in committees and sections.
- Recommendation from the current committee chair. (Source: Board, Midwinter 2009)

Although the appointment process may reflect the priorities of the vice-president/president-elect and section vice-chairs, several factors are always considered:

- **Evidence of interest and expertise.** Have prospective volunteers visited and/or posted to the committee's ALA Connect community, introduced themselves to the chair, or attended the meetings (virtual or face-to-face)? Do they have knowledge and/or previous experience that relates to the work of the committee? Have they indicated their interest on the volunteer form?
- **Demographics and composition of committee.** A balance is sought with respect to type of library (community college, college, or university), geographic representation, ethnic diversity, and gender. Those who have not had the opportunity to serve on an ACRL committee are encouraged to volunteer as it is important to add new perspectives.
- **Recommendations from the current committee chair.** Current committee chairs are asked to suggest prospective members.
- **Willingness to participate in the work of the committee.** Volunteers should be prepared to engage in the committee work year-round.

The final appointments are the prerogative of the ACRL president-elect and the section vice-chairs.

## How to Apply

**1. Identify the committee(s) that interest you.**

ACRL committees with their charges, and ALA Connect Communities are listed on the ACRL Directory of Leadership at https://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership. Check out the committee's space in ALA Connect, where documents, meetings, discourses, and the work of the committees are posted. Attend virtual committee meetings throughout the year or attend face-to-face meetings at the ALA Annual Conference to decide if their activities interest you. Talk/email with committee members. Express your interest to the committee chair. Ask about current projects and explain how you might contribute to the work of the committee.

**2. Submit a volunteer form (Chrome or Firefox are the recommended browsers for accessing the form).**

The volunteer forms must be submitted by **February 28, 2026**. You will be asked to log in using your ALA member ID and the password you created. Please be sure that you are a **current** ALA/ACRL member before attempting to log in.

To volunteer for a division-level or section committee, you must complete the online volunteer form at https://www.ala.org/CFApps/volunteer/form.cfm.

If you experience issues logging into the form, please contact ALA Member Relations & Services at 1-800-545-2433 to check your membership status. If your ALA/ACRL membership is current and you still have an issue accessing the form, clear your cache and refresh your browser.

**3. Volunteer again and check out other opportunities.**
Know that we value you as a member. If you are not appointed, we hope that you will consider reapplying during the next appointment cycle. In addition, continue to explore ACRL's many opportunities to network and connect at https://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/getinvolved. Review the many discussion and interest groups. Each group selects a new leader in the spring outside of the volunteer process described above. If you would like to start a new discussion or interest group, contact ACRL Professional Development Support Megan Griffin at mgriffin@ala.org.

## ACRL Division-Level Committee Appointments

ACRL committees and their charges can be found on the ACRL Directory of Leadership: https://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership.

Appointments to ACRL standing committees are made in the spring for terms beginning immediately after the ALA Annual Conference. The Appointments Committee sends appointment recommendations to the ACRL president-elect. The president-elect makes the final appointments for the committees.

Questions about ACRL division-level appointments may be directed to the chair of the Appointments Committee, Alex R. Hodges**,** Director, Monroe C. Gutman Library, Harvard University, alex_hodges@gse.harvard.edu.

If you have any questions about using the volunteer form, please contact ACRL Program Officer Elois Sharpe for division-level committees at esharpe@ala.org or (312) 280-5277 or ACRL Professional Development Support Megan Griffin for section committees at mgriffin@ala.org.

## ACRL Section Appointments

ACRL sections help members customize their ACRL experience through newsletters, electronic discussion lists, specialized programming, and various initiatives. Please visit https://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership/sections, to learn more about these great groups. Section vice-chairs appoint members to section committees. Most appointments are made in the spring for terms beginning immediately after the ALA Annual Conference.

If you wish to be considered for a section committee appointment, you must complete the ACRL volunteer form at https://www.ala.org/CFApps/volunteer/form.cfm by February 28, 2026. (Chrome or Firefox are the recommended browsers for accessing the form). For more information about section appointments, please contact the section vice-chairs:

**Anthropology and Sociology Section (ANSS):** Catherine Bowers, Valdosta State University, csbowers@valdosta.edu.

**Arts Section (Arts):** Lauren Puzier, University at Albany, lpuzier@albany.edu.

**College Libraries Section (CLS):** Susan Mythen, Florida State College at Jacksonville, smythen@fscj.edu.

**Community and Junior College Libraries Section (CJCLS):** Christine (Mi-Seon) Kim, Queensborough Community College, mkim@qcc.cuny.edu.

**Digital Scholarship Section (DSS):** Teresa Schultz, University of Nevada, Reno, teresas@unr.edu.

**Distance and Online Learning Section (DOLS):** Hope Kelly, Virginia Commonwealth University, kellyh3@vcu.edu.

**Education and Behavioral Sciences Section (EBSS):** Stephen Maher, New York University, stephen.maher@nyu.edu.

**European Studies Section (ESS):** Chellammal Vaidyanathan, Emory University, cvaidy2@emory.edu.

**Instruction Section (IS):** Maoria J. Kirker, George Mason University, mkirker@gmu.edu.

**Literatures in English Section (LES):** Mark Dahlquist, Miami University, dahlqumj@miamioh.edu.

**Politics, Policy and International Relations Section (PPIRS):** Danya Leebaw, University of Minnesota, leeba005@umn.edu.

**Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS):** Julie K. Tanaka, University of Washington, jktanaka@uw.edu.

**Science and Technology Section (STS):** Tara Radniecki, University of Arizona, radniecki@arizona.edu.

**University Libraries Section (ULS):** Carrie Donovan, University of Pittsburgh, cdonovan@pitt.edu.

**Women and Gender Studies Section:** Katerina Allmendinger, University of Colorado Boulder, katerina.allmendinger@colorado.edu.

## Editorial Boards

ACRL has eleven editorial/advisory boards for its publications; ACRL/Core Interdivisional Academic Library Facilities Survey Editorial Board; *Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey* Editorial Board; *Choice* Editorial Board; *College & Research Libraries* Editorial Board; *College & Research Libraries News* Editorial Board; New Publications Advisory Board; Project Outcome for Academic Libraries Editorial Board; Publications in Librarianship Editorial Board; *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage Editorial* Board; *Resources for College Libraries* Editorial Board and Threshold Achievement Test for Information Literacy (TATIL) Editorial Board.

Appointments for editorial boards are made in late March for terms that begin immediately after the ALA Annual Conference. The editors recommend the names of individuals to fill vacancies. The Publications Coordinating Committee approves the recommendations, and the ACRL vice-president/president-elect makes the appointments.

If you would like to be considered for appointment to an editorial board, https://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership/editorialboards/ebs, contact the editor of the editorial board early in the fall and indicate your interest on the ACRL online volunteer form.

***Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey* Editorial Board chair:** Elizabeth Anne Brown, Binghamton University Libraries; phone: (607) 777-4882; email: ebrown@binghamton.edu.

**ACRL/Core Interdivisional Academic Library Facilities Survey Editorial Board ACRL co-chair:** Jennifer Arnold, Central Piedmont Community College; phone: (704) 330-6635; email: jennifer.arnold@cpcc.edu.

***CHOICE* Editorial Board editor and publisher:** Rachel Hendrick, Choice; phone: (860) 347-6933 x29; email: rhendrick@ala.org.

***College & Research Libraries* Editorial Board editor:** Dr. Michelle Demeter, New York University; phone: (212) 998-2480; email: med15@nyu.edu.

***College & Research Libraries News* Editorial Board editor:** David Free, ACRL; email: dfree@ala.org.

**New Publications Advisory Board chair:** Marcela Yael Isuster, McGill University; phone: (514) 398-4729; email: marcela.isuster@mcgill.ca.

**Project Outcome for Academic Libraries Editorial Board chair**: Lamonica Sanford; Georgia College; email: lamonica.sanford@gcsu.edu.

***Publications in Librarianship* chair:** Samantha H. Peter, University of Wyoming; phone: (307) 766-5566; email: scook13@uwyo.edu.

***RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* editor:** Diane H. Dias De Fazio**,** Carnegie Libraries of Pittsburgh; email: diane.diasdefazio@gmail.com.

***Resources for College Libraries* chair:** Alison M. Armstrong, Radford University; phone: (540) 831-5699; email: amarmstro@radford.edu.

**Threshold Achievement Test for Information Literacy (TATIL) Editorial Board chair**: Lindsay Matts-Benson, University of Minnesota; email: matt0341@umn.edu.

Anne Jumonville Graf

# Consumers or Readers?

## Exploring the Language of Information "Use"

In the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education,[1] information is consumed, evaluated, synthesized, and created. Students question, reflect, articulate, and seek. But nowhere are they named as "readers," nor is "reading" specifically used to describe information literacy skills or abilities. While others have noted this absence,[2] it's not hard to interpret many of the Framework's knowledge practices as encompassing or referring to different types of reading. In this article, I would like to examine reading practices supported by the Framework and discuss benefits of recognizing reading more formally within discussions of information literacy teaching and learning.

## Where Is Reading in the Framework?

A variety of reading skills are required to develop information literacy, such as the ability to decode, understand, and comprehend texts at multiple levels, as well as analyze, contextualize, and question texts and sources. Approaches to reading or "consuming" sources are also an area where expert and novice practices in specific contexts vary significantly.[3] Different formats and environments inform a variety of reading preferences, behaviors, and choices.[4] As a result, many types of reading, from skimming and scanning to more critical engagement, are required to engage in the abilities, actions, and understandings the Framework references.

Although all these reading skills are encompassed by *metaliteracy*, they may not be "read" as such by other scholars. Information literacy discussions end up siloed from other discussions of reading in higher education,[5] limiting the potential of the Framework to function across disciplinary lines. Meanwhile, in Sophie Bury's study of faculty views on information literacy, participants see academic reading and writing abilities as intertwined with information literacy development.[6] Scholars in writing and composition studies, often with librarian collaborators, have long paid attention to the relationship between reading, writing, and research.[7] With these connections in mind, I would like to explore how traditions of critical reading offer another way to view *information consumption* and *use*—terms that are present throughout the Framework.

## Defining Reading in Context

The Merriam-Webster online dictionary includes eleven entries for uses of the verb "read," ranging from receiving, comprehending, and understanding information to engaging in interpretive acts.[8] Ellen C. Carillo, a composition scholar, defines *reading* on the latter end

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of this spectrum: "a deliberate intellectual practice that helps us make sense of—interpret—that which surrounds us."[9] As Carillo points out, this definition emphasizes a reflexive stance in which readers recognize not only how texts can shape our own understanding but also how our own understanding shapes our readings of texts.[10] I like this broad definition of reading for a discussion of information literacy because it brings out the metacognitive lens essential to the Framework.

Carillo's definition also bridges the sometimes-disparate traditions of critical reading explored by Karen Manarin, Miriam Carey, Melanie Rathburn, and Glen Ryland. According to Manarin and her coauthors, critical reading in the academic sense often includes skills such as distinguishing between main and supporting ideas, evaluating claims, and coming to view oneself—as a reader and as part of an academic community.[11] Critical reading for the purpose of social engagement, by contrast, emphasizes reading as a way of "questioning assumptions" and "recognizing power relations" for the sake of social engagement and change.[12] Both definitions require us to allow texts to read us—that is, question our own assumptions rather than solely question texts. I will next examine where and how the Framework connects this kind of reading to information literacy development.

## Reading Practices Supported in the Framework

Readers of this essay will likely see academic and social traditions of critical reading in the Framework. For example, to understand the concept that Authority is Constructed and contextual, novices are encouraged to "critically examine all evidence."[13] Performing this type of examination uses different reading skills, ranging from skimming and scanning to critically evaluating source claims, which align with academic traditions of critical reading. Dispositions for this frame also draw from critical pedagogy as they encourage learners to "question traditional notions of granting authority and recognize the value of diverse ideas and worldviews."[14]

In the Scholarship as Conversation frame, reading as a process of situating one source among others extends the contextualization of scholarly authority: to "recognize that a given scholarly work may not represent the only—or even the majority—perspective on the issue."[15] Importantly, this ability or choice rests on the reader's metacognitive orientation to the task—that is, the disposition that a reader can or will "suspend judgment on the value of a particular piece of scholarship until the larger context for the scholarly conversation is better understood."[16] The ability to temporarily "suspend judgment" requires an understanding of one's own presence as a reader, a reading practice in which social and academic approaches to critical reading overlap.

Sometimes the importance of reading to understand can be minimized in discussions of critical reading in order to focus on higher-order objectives, such as analysis or evaluation.[17] But reading to understand is necessary for reading critically. Critical pedagogy advocate Stephen D. Brookfield writes about the importance of "understanding the text in the terms the author sets" before attempting to surface and critique the underlying assumptions of both reader and writer.[18] In a chapter of Hannah Gascho Rempel and Rachel Hamelers' *Teaching Critical Reading Skills: Strategies for Academic Librarians,* Elliott Kuecker makes a similar point: "Close reading requires a radical openness to the thing being encountered, a desire to listen to what it has to say on its own terms."[19] Here, in the context of critical reading traditions, close reading functions as a specific method of open-minded attention, described as "a desire

to listen." This metacognitive work requires strategic open-mindedness to the perspectives of others. I argue that this perspective is not well captured by the language of "consuming" or "using" information. Mark Lenker references a workshop by Jane Hammons at Ohio State University that responds to this problem. Entitled "Voices Not Sources: Reframing How We Teach Searching for and Evaluating Sources,"[20] Hammons's shift from "sources" to "voices" is a lovely way of invoking the act of reading as a form of listening.

In Research as Inquiry, novices may "monitor gathered information and assess for gaps or weaknesses" to "draw reasonable conclusions based on the analysis and interpretation of information,"[21] both of which rely on the ability to comprehend and evaluate the information present as well as what is missing. In a study comparing frameworks of information literacy and writing, Amy C. Rice, Dennis D. Cartwright, Lauren Hays, and Grace Veach's librarian and writing instructor study participants noted similarities between the Research as Inquiry frame and the function of reading in frameworks from writing studies.[22] From the composition perspective, reading is an element of research as inquiry that emphasizes comprehension, analysis, and synthesis in preparation for writing or other forms of knowledge production. Lenker echoes this approach in his consideration of the challenges of information synthesis, noting that synthesis involves the activities of comparing sources and noting silences or gaps.[23] This work relies on the reading skills of comprehension and analysis and frames reading as also listening for what is not said or who is not present.

From one perspective, all these examples underscore the close connections between the Framework and critical reading traditions. However, though these connections are evoked by the Frames themselves, they are less apparent in the language of information use and consumption. The Framework's support of students as information producers and participants can, without careful attention, contribute to this tendency. As Brittney Johnson and I. Moriah McCracken note, "To help students understand the process of information creation, they must be engaged in assignments that position them first as consumers of information—those who must understand that these kinds of decisions were deliberately made by the original authors—and second as producers of information—those who determine what kind of information to create."[24] If we name modes of information consumption as "reading," we can use critical reading traditions to describe how consuming or using information is also about self-awareness, perspective-seeking, and, to return to Carillo's phrase, the process of making sense of "that which surrounds us."[25]

## Expert and Novice Reading Practices

Interestingly, the Framework's disciplinary companion documents do speak explicitly to ways practitioners read to learn as well as learn how to read in a particular discourse community.[26,27] These depictions of reading echo Miller's examination of disciplinary information literacy practices, which also surfaced specific reading approaches as means of learning and participating in particular scholarly communities.[28] However, assessments of student reading for research assignments can tell a different story. In a study of students' research assignments, Manarin et al. found that "asking students to find and use sources led them to do just that, not necessarily to read, understand, or synthesize them."[29]

Although information about student reading practices can be used to reinforce the "reading crisis trope,"[30] I do not intend this argument to function solely as a critique of student or "novice" reading practices. While many librarians would readily agree that they have

worked with students who have already written a thesis statement and are now in search of sources to support it,[31] fewer would admit to the ways in which scholarly communication ecosystems, news, or social media drive us to similar behavior. We could ask ourselves: In which situations do we also "not" read—or read superficially? Where do we adopt a critical stance before seeking understanding? Do we suspend judgement in pursuit of understanding context? Complicating the picture of who reads what, how, and why might allow us to explore more reflexively some of the challenges of developing information literacy today.

## Teaching Reading in the Library Classroom

Despite the omission in the Framework, librarians have written extensively about incorporating critical reading approaches,[32] especially into activities like source selection[33] and source evaluation.[34] Lenker locates the value of information sources in students' ability to determine how those sources have expanded their knowledge as information consumers (for example, readers). "Has this post on my go-to news site really left me better off? Have I changed my thinking because of reading this? Has it helped me grow as a person?"[35] The critically reflective nature of these questions positions reading as a means of understanding ourselves as well as the texts we encounter. Recognizing reading as an information literacy practice puts a greater spotlight on how we construct ourselves through our "use" and "consumption" of information.

Of course, the time it takes to read, and to read within the constraints of a teaching model like a one-time workshop, puts some structural constraints on reading instruction or opportunities to guide practice. That "reading takes time" may very well be a threshold concept for students, similar to Doug Downs's claim that "Time is a threshold concept in writing."[36] That it is difficult to "make time" for reading in library instruction classrooms can also serve as a reflexive moment that reveals how we signal the value and purpose of reading. Without practice and experience, it is harder to understand what is happening when reading and synthesizing are increasingly outsourced to generative artificial intelligence (AI) in what Olof Sundin describes as the shift from "searching for documents to searching for answers."[37] This is not to reject those tools outright but to position ourselves and students to understand the significance of the work we are "saved" from doing by using them. As the Framework revision process continues, I suggest that the dispositions for Information has Value might gesture toward this understanding by naming the "skills, time, and effort" needed not only to produce but also to "consume" (for example, read) information sources. We show that we value information not only by producing it but also by how we consume it.

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Charidy Paige and Jeanine Finn

# From Student Project to Research Agenda

## How Libraries Facilitate GIS Education and Collaboration

Geographic information systems (GIS) have been a tool and methodology deeply intertwined with academic libraries since the initial efforts of ARL and ESRI to support the development of map librarians into geospatial data experts in the early 1990s.[1] Although GIS in libraries has been a source of successful collaborations, the demands are often overwhelming for library staff.[2] Over time, the scale, formats, and methods of data sharing have evolved significantly,[3] requiring skills beyond many traditional library competencies.

Exemplifying these trends, The Claremont Colleges Library (TCCL) has supported GIS through an Esri educational license and various supporting data subscription products since the late 1990s. Uniquely positioned as an academic library, TCCL supports seven separate educational institutions (five small liberal arts colleges and two graduate colleges) under the umbrella of a separate services organization. Between 2020 and 2022, following a major shift to online learning across all of our constituent colleges, our library experienced a dramatic increase in ArcGIS users, particularly users of ArcGIS Online, and sought to create a more sustainable support infrastructure. Toward that end, we created a graduate student position and hired a doctoral student from Claremont Graduate University's Center for Information Systems and Technology (CGU-CISAT) with substantial GIS experience to develop an ArcGIS Hub site. The goal was to establish the hub site as a central online presence for sharing data and educational resources.

## Background

In the spring 2022 semester, Charidy Paige worked as a library GIS student assistant at TCCL under the guidance of Data Science and Digital Scholarship Coordinator Jeanine Finn. Her primary responsibility was to develop an ArcGIS Hub site to provide a centralized site for geospatial content for students and faculty from the colleges. Although the Esri Hub platform met the project's technical requirements, finding and curating the content for the site highlighted the organizational challenges in GIS support at the Claremont Colleges. We struggled to make GIS tools and data more accessible and useful for intercollegiate and interdisciplinary collaboration because of the limited understanding of the nature of these collaborations. Key issues such as cross-institutional access, platform maintenance, and ownership responsibilities created complexities that needed to be addressed within a

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multi-institutional framework. With eight different IT departments across our consortium and a growing number of departments and courses exploring GIS applications, we realized we didn't have a sufficient picture of our user community within this complex environment.

As we discussed these challenges, we found useful support for better understanding a path forward in two theoretical constructs from organizational studies and science and technology studies. First, Boundary Object Theory[4] proved useful in illustrating how shared tools or platforms, like ArcGIS, can successfully exist at the intersection of heterogeneous practices—if the shared understanding of them is both consistent and flexible. Similarly, Resource Dependency Theory explains how organizations reduce environmental interdependence and uncertainty.[5] It provides a framework to understand how limited resources, institutional dependencies, and priorities can create barriers to intercollegiate and interdisciplinary collaboration. Together, these theories help explain the systematic issues encountered during Paige's work and provide a foundation for her dissertation, "Unlocking Organizational Potential for GIS Collaboration in Higher Education."

## Boundary Object Theory

As originally developed by Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, the theory of "boundary objects" has been used in understanding how different communities engaged in complex knowledge work can converge around a single object, even if each community has a different understanding and set of functions associated of the object.[6] As originally defined, "Boundary objects are objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites."[7]

In our case, GIS tools are used and understood in various ways by the departments and researchers in our community, but "GIS" still serves a central coordinating function. Considering GIS as a boundary object allows us to engage across several communities (including instructional departments and IT support) that may be operating with diverging organizational goals and unique constraints to better understand the barriers to collaboration.

## Resource Dependency Theory

Resource Dependency Theory recognizes the influence of external factors on organizational behavior. Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald R. Salancik emphasize that organizations must manage dependencies on external resources to mitigate uncertainty and exert control over their environment.[8] Although organizations are constrained by their context, managers can still act to reduce environmental uncertainty and dependence.[9]

Developing an ArcGIS Hub site to centralize geospatial content revealed several resource dependencies that hindered the library's ability to realize its role as a GIS support entity. TCCL benefits from an Esri educational site license (paid from the library's budget), which provides students and faculty access to many of Esri's suite of products. Although Esri is the leading GIS software globally, this reliance also creates limitations, leaving gaps in knowledge and skills related to alternative GIS software, such as open-source tools. Additionally, cross-institutional collaboration within the Claremont Colleges created interdependencies that further complicated support efforts, such as negotiating ownership of shared content, managing maintenance responsibilities, and ensuring access for all consortium members. These dependencies were often opaque to the library license administrators.

RDT provides a framework for understanding how these challenges manifest. Libraries, like other organizations, operate within a resource-dependent ecosystem where they must navigate relationships with external entities (that is, software vendors, funding agencies, and so on) while simultaneously addressing the needs of students and faculty. Furthermore, resource limitations such as staffing, funding, and technical expertise must be considered when establishing support levels for an institution.

## First Steps: GIS Education Through Dialogue and Collaboration

Following these conversations, we began to develop a fuller picture of the difficulties in supporting GIS curriculum and instruction as we engaged with other researchers and scholars in this space. In the spring 2022 semester, we participated in workshops with Pomona College Professor Guillermo Douglass-Jaimes aimed at redesigning the *Just! GIS* course, which draws on Critical GIS principles to emphasize ethical and socially just applications of GIS tools. These workshops were instrumental in developing a Collective Learning Model (CLM) for GIS instruction, focusing on peer mentorship, technical problem solving, and the cocreation of GIS tutorials. During these sessions, collaboration with staff from the Claremont Colleges Library and Pomona College IT department revealed several key barriers to accessing GIS tools, particularly for non-Pomona students. Issues such as licensing, technical access to software, and integration of GIS services across different colleges were identified as central challenges.

Later that year, in December, we attended the first GIS Librarians for Open Workflows (GLOW) Forum at the University of Chicago, where librarians and GIS professionals from across North America convened to discuss best practices for GIS support in academic libraries. Our participation in this forum was directly related to Paige's work with the Claremont Colleges Library, as it provided insights into how GIS librarians can better support faculty and students across institutions. The forum covered several key topics that align with her research and work at the library, including the importance of resource identification, the integration of GIS with data science services, and setting clear expectations for GIS consultations. Additionally, a discussion on open educational resources (OERs) focused on the challenges of ensuring quality and consistency in GIS instruction when relying on freely available resources.

Participation in both of these initiatives shaped Paige's research and led her to develop her dissertation topic, which sought to understand the various challenges that arise during GIS collaboration. Her experience working on the ArcGIS Hub site and engaging with interdisciplinary teams highlighted organizational barriers and gaps in collaboration, prompting her to explore these issues in depth. To explore the challenges and practices associated with GIS collaboration in higher education, a survey was developed using Microsoft Forms. The primary objective of the survey was to gather information from GIS instructors on collaborating with GIS technologies outside their department and institutions. The survey aimed to validate and potentially discover technical and organizational challenges encountered during external collaborations. Additionally, it sought to uncover new approaches and best practices that GIS instructors used to navigate these challenges. The survey featured a mix of multiple-choice and short answers, organized into six categories: institutional and teaching background; GIS usage and support; GIS collaboration tools and applications; collaboration; internal and external challenges; and evaluation.

## Ongoing Research

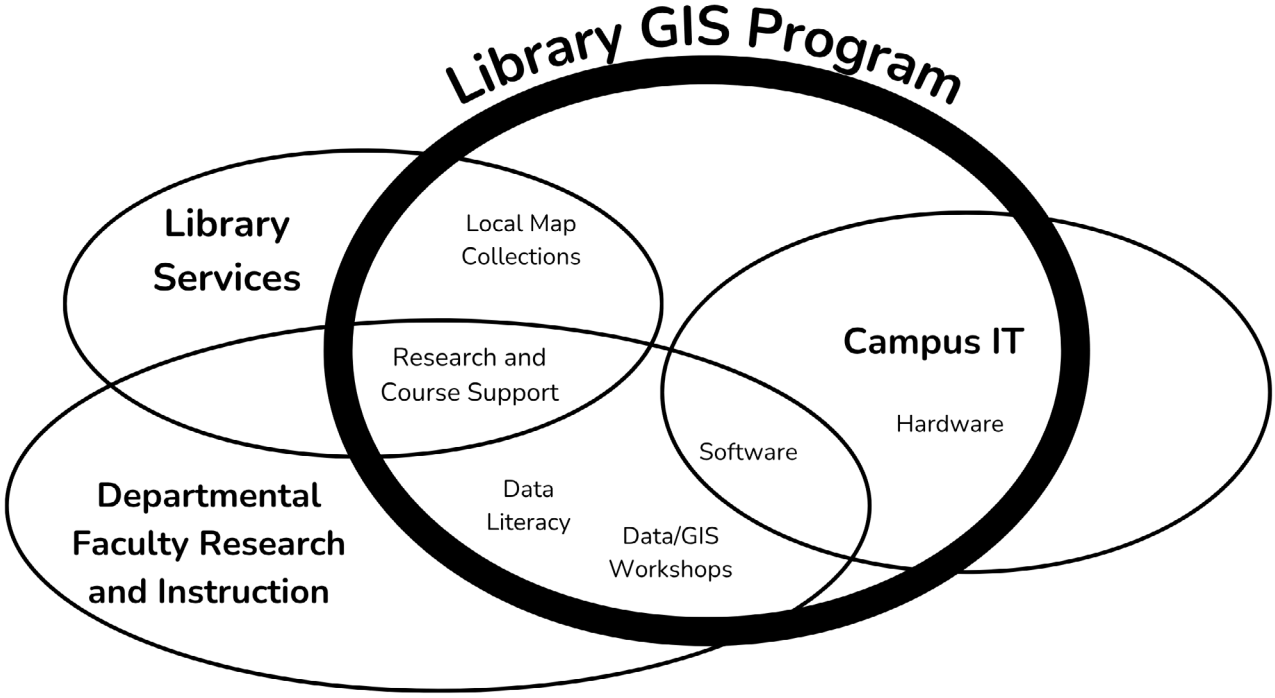
Paige's research originated from an exploration of intercollegiate collaboration within the Claremont Colleges, intending to foster stronger connections among GIS users. In May 2022, a virtual GIS faculty panel discussion was hosted to further explore the needs and priorities of GIS users. This discussion was guided by prepared questions and supplemented by three surveys addressing GIS training, collaboration, and data. The primary goal was to enhance intercollegiate collaboration and identify opportunities for more effective integration of GIS resources and expertise across the Claremont Colleges. The forum's discussion shed light on larger issues and challenges that extended beyond the initial focus, such as determining ownership and maintenance of the Hub site, identifying appropriate data sources, and defining the content. As the project progressed, it became evident that a more comprehensive understanding of GIS teaching perceptions and the barriers to adopting data-sharing platforms was necessary. As a result, the research shifted away from focusing on a specific solution (ArcGIS Hub) to foster intercollegiate collaboration and instead expanded to include a wider network of GIS instructors beyond the Claremont Colleges. The study now examines experiences of instructors across North America with GIS collaboration, particularly when working across departments and institutions.

Although Paige's research focuses on the broader experiences of GIS instructors, certain questions in her survey provide perspectives that can directly inform and support library services. For instance, when asked how students receive GIS support, respondents could select multiple options: Instructor support was reported thirty-six times, IT departments fifteen times, and libraries thirteen times. Although IT departments have traditionally played a role in GIS support and instructors remain the primary resource, this reflects the evolving role of librarians in providing and maintaining technology-driven resources, including geospatial data.[10]

In addition to examining how students receive support, the survey also asks participants to identify types of support that would help them collaborate better. The most frequently selected support type was increased funding and grants for collaboration, followed by the facilitation of interdepartmental and institutional partnerships. Although securing funding may fall outside of the traditional role of librarians, libraries are well positioned to support facilitation. By building on their existing strengths in making resources findable and accessible as a path to foster collaboration, libraries can help alleviate the burden on instructors, who are often inundated with preparing lectures, grading, and providing technical support to students, leaving little time to coordinate collaborations among peers. By bridging departmental silos, libraries can support the introduction of GIS to other disciplines while serving as central hubs through any of the following initiatives:

- Facilitate interdepartmental partnerships
- Facilitate cross-institutional partnerships
- Coordinate GIS events
- Host professional development opportunities
- Create collaborative projects

There are many other ways that libraries can partner with faculty. Libraries share a natural affinity with faculty and academic departments in that they all share in teaching and facilitating student learning.[11] Determining the level of support that a library will provide requires




A library GIS program at the center of areas of practice on campus.

case-by-case assessment and a strategic approach to align capacity and resources with the specific needs of instructors and departments.

## Conclusion

The collaboration between the Claremont College Library and a graduate student provided a look into the challenges of GIS support within a multi-institutional framework, which can also be applied to understanding the complexities of library collaboration across departments. By leveraging theories such as Boundary Object Theory and Resource Dependency Theory, we can further explore new ways of understanding how libraries navigate resource dependencies, build connections, and spark innovation. There is so much potential for libraries not only to support GIS literacy and research but also to drive collaboration within academic institutions in ways that develop mutually beneficial relationships and skill building across communities of instructors, students, and library staff.

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Giovanna Badia

# "Just Do It"

## Using Questions to Create Professional Development Opportunities

I worked in libraries part time throughout my education, starting in high school. When I announced to my then-employer that I was accepted to the Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) program at McGill University, she told me something that I never forgot. She said that the degree provided the required piece of paper to get my foot into librarianship but that I would need to keep learning throughout my career to do the job well. I graduated with my MLIS degree more than two decades ago and have since engaged in a variety of professional development activities to keep my skills current and improve my daily practice. The best professional development activities have involved doing what I learned about, either during the course of the activity itself or shortly thereafter. I think of the Nike slogan, "Just Do It," when it comes to applying what I learned. I believe improving your skills and training others does not happen overnight. It is not a race to the finish line but requires taking consistent action over time. The actions can be small or not; consistency is the key. This article describes two question-centric professional development activities for library professionals from the perspectives of the instructor and learners, as well as lists other possible activities that may be appropriate for training at your own institutions.

## An Advice Column with a Twist

One of my responsibilities in McGill Libraries is to provide data reference services, which involves answering data questions, providing instructional activities for our user community on finding and working with data, and supporting colleagues in answering the data questions they receive. I respond to questions sent to our library service email account.

To address a need that colleagues expressed to learn more about data sources and searching for data, I thought it might be useful to share some of the questions I received from users as well as the responses given. A large component of the knowledge I have gained in data reference is having the opportunity to answer the questions myself, which I sought to provide for colleagues. I started the "Dear Data Library" search column in July 2023, which I announced as an advice column with a twist. A real question I received from a user is posted on McGill Libraries' internal, virtual reference listserv on Mondays. The response provided to the user, with my search strategy notes included at the bottom of the email, is not sent to the listserv until Fridays to give colleagues an opportunity to try finding the answer to the question themselves during the week. Members of our virtual reference listserv include all of our public services librarians. I provide a hint or some guidance on how I found a relevant

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answer when I share the question at the beginning of each week. The column emails always contain the phrase "Dear Data Library" in their subject lines.

The column was published weekly during the summer 2023 term and changed to a monthly schedule during the academic year in response to feedback received. The column was evaluated at the end of August 2023 with a survey distributed to those on the virtual reference listserv. Some colleagues felt the weekly publication schedule was too much, did not give them a chance to try all the questions due to their position responsibilities.

I have continued the column on a monthly basis during the academic year (first week of every month) and on a biweekly basis during the summer (every 2 weeks). I have also continued receiving positive informal feedback about content presented in the column over time, such as conveying appreciation for receiving answers to certain questions. Using questions received from users and providing guidance with the question when it is posted prevents this activity from becoming labor intensive for both the creator and participants. The questions received from users are anonymized, but rather than fabricating names for the individuals who asked the questions, I use names of historical figures who have made important contributions to the field of statistics or data visualization to make it fun. I invite colleagues to research them and their contributions.

**Dear Data Library - Statistics on the Black population in Canada**



**Giovanna Badia <giovanna.badia@mcgill.ca>**

Monday, August 21, 2023 at 8:58 AM

**To:** VIRTUALREFERENCE@LISTS.MCGILL.CA

Dear Data Library,

I am looking for recent government statistics on the Black population in Canada and Quebec, a recent article similar to this, "Diversity of the Black population in Canada: an overview," shall be great. I have had challenges finding recent stats similar to this.

I am specifically interested in labour market participation and integration of sub-Saharan African immigrants in Canada (specifically Quebec if possible). Having an overview of the entire Black population will enable me to make the comparisons.

Please contact me for any clarifications. Thank you!

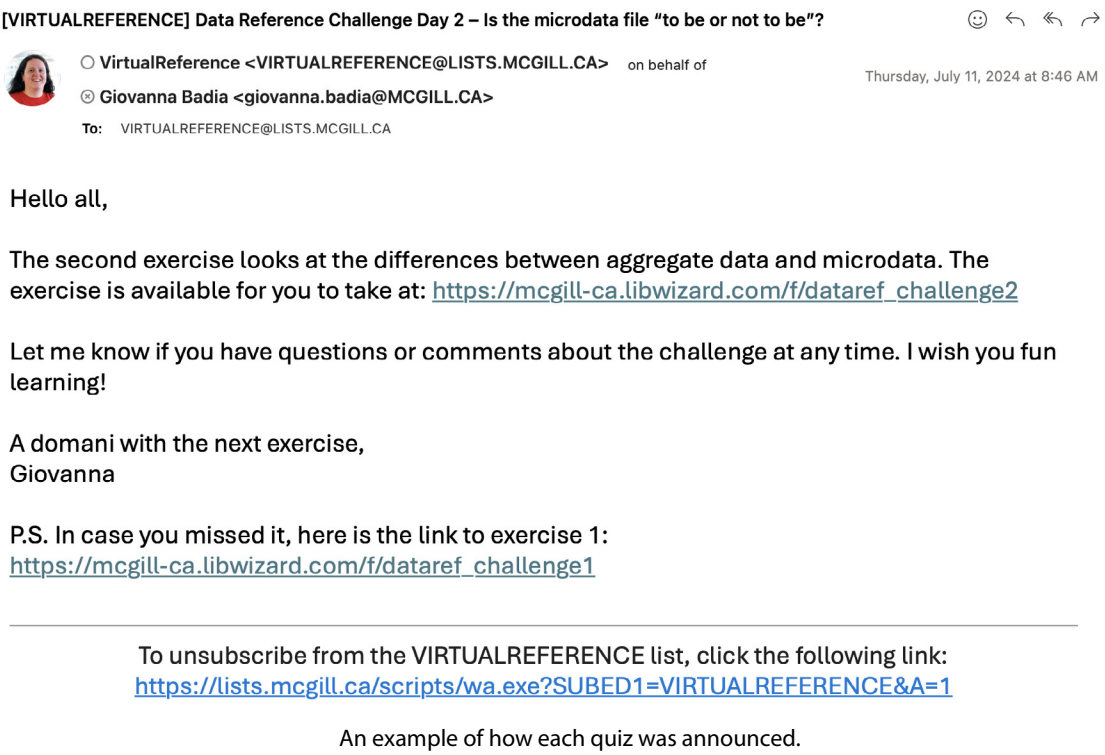
Sincerely,
Chester Bliss

Hint: One of the relevant sources is a Statistics Canada survey with a response rate (over 95%) that Giovanna can only dream about.

An example of a "Dear Data Library" column, published in August 2023.

## A Reference Challenge, with a Scoop of Ice Cream on the Side

As a complement to the "Dear Data Library" column, I offered colleagues the opportunity to participate in a 15-Day Data Reference Challenge in the summer 2024 term. This involved completing exercises that were released daily on McGill Libraries' virtual reference listserv starting in early July. Each exercise consisted of completing an online quiz with four to five data questions, which was designed to take less than thirty minutes to finish and included accompanying instructional material as well as solutions.



[VIRTUALREFERENCE] Data Reference Challenge Day 2 – Is the microdata file "to be or not to be"?

VirtualReference <VIRTUALREFERENCE@LISTS.MCGILL.CA> on behalf of
Giovanna Badia <giovanna.badia@MCGILL.CA>
Thursday, July 11, 2024 at 8:46 AM
To: VIRTUALREFERENCE@LISTS.MCGILL.CA

Hello all,

The second exercise looks at the differences between aggregate data and microdata. The exercise is available for you to take at: https://mcgill-ca.libwizard.com/f/dataref_challenge2

Let me know if you have questions or comments about the challenge at any time. I wish you fun learning!

A domani with the next exercise,
Giovanna

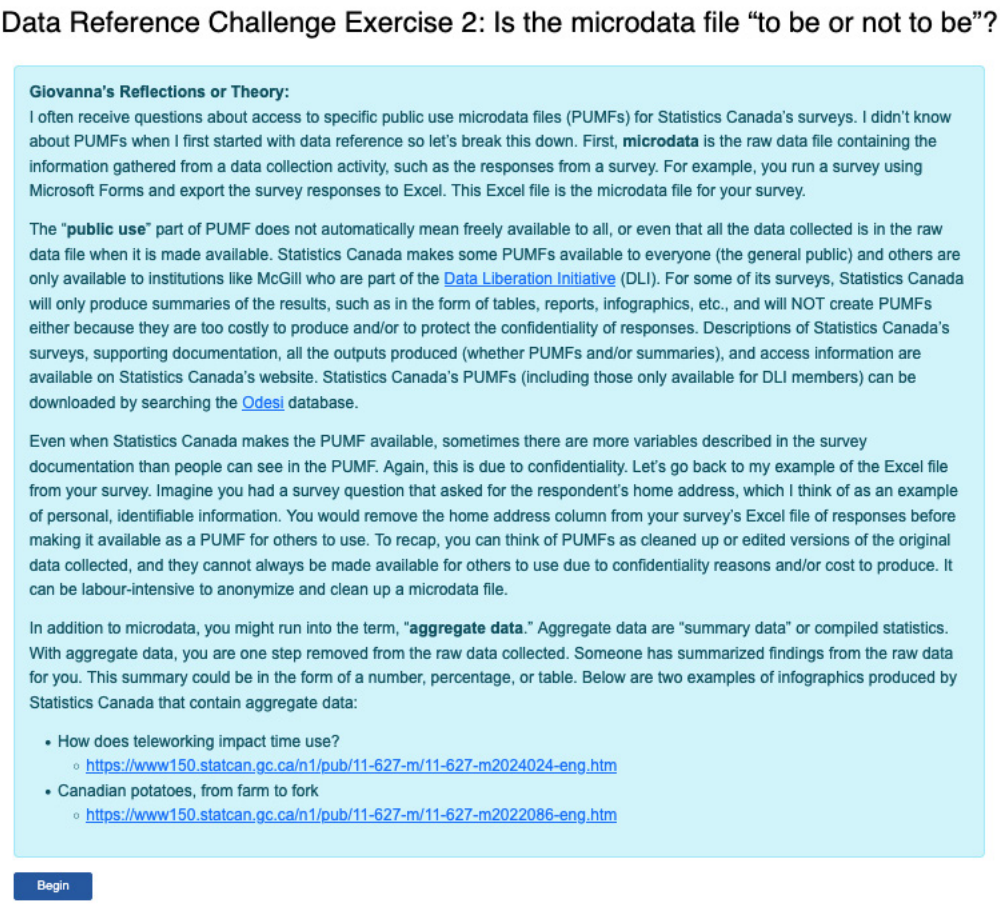
P.S. In case you missed it, here is the link to exercise 1:
https://mcgill-ca.libwizard.com/f/dataref_challenge1

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To unsubscribe from the VIRTUALREFERENCE list, click the following link:
https://lists.mcgill.ca/scripts/wa.exe?SUBED1=VIRTUALREFERENCE&A=1

An example of how each quiz was announced.

Topics covered in the quizzes were based on data questions I received from the McGill community and included finding known and unknown datasets, working with Statistics Canada's Census of Population data, and identifying when to stop searching when an answer is not found. Colleagues were also given the chance to substitute three exercises with their



Data Reference Challenge Exercise 2: Is the microdata file "to be or not to be"?

**Giovanna's Reflections or Theory:**
I often receive questions about access to specific public use microdata files (PUMFs) for Statistics Canada's surveys. I didn't know about PUMFs when I first started with data reference so let's break this down. First, **microdata** is the raw data file containing the information gathered from a data collection activity, such as the responses from a survey. For example, you run a survey using Microsoft Forms and export the survey responses to Excel. This Excel file is the microdata file for your survey.

The "**public use**" part of PUMF does not automatically mean freely available to all, or even that all the data collected is in the raw data file when it is made available. Statistics Canada makes some PUMFs available to everyone (the general public) and others are only available to institutions like McGill who are part of the Data Liberation Initiative (DLI). For some of its surveys, Statistics Canada will only produce summaries of the results, such as in the form of tables, reports, infographics, etc., and will NOT create PUMFs either because they are too costly to produce and/or to protect the confidentiality of responses. Descriptions of Statistics Canada's surveys, supporting documentation, all the outputs produced (whether PUMFs and/or summaries), and access information are available on Statistics Canada's website. Statistics Canada's PUMFs (including those only available for DLI members) can be downloaded by searching the Odesi database.

Even when Statistics Canada makes the PUMF available, sometimes there are more variables described in the survey documentation than people can see in the PUMF. Again, this is due to confidentiality. Let's go back to my example of the Excel file from your survey. Imagine you had a survey question that asked for the respondent's home address, which I think of as an example of personal, identifiable information. You would remove the home address column from your survey's Excel file of responses before making it available as a PUMF for others to use. To recap, you can think of PUMFs as cleaned up or edited versions of the original data collected, and they cannot always be made available for others to use due to confidentiality reasons and/or cost to produce. It can be labour-intensive to anonymize and clean up a microdata file.

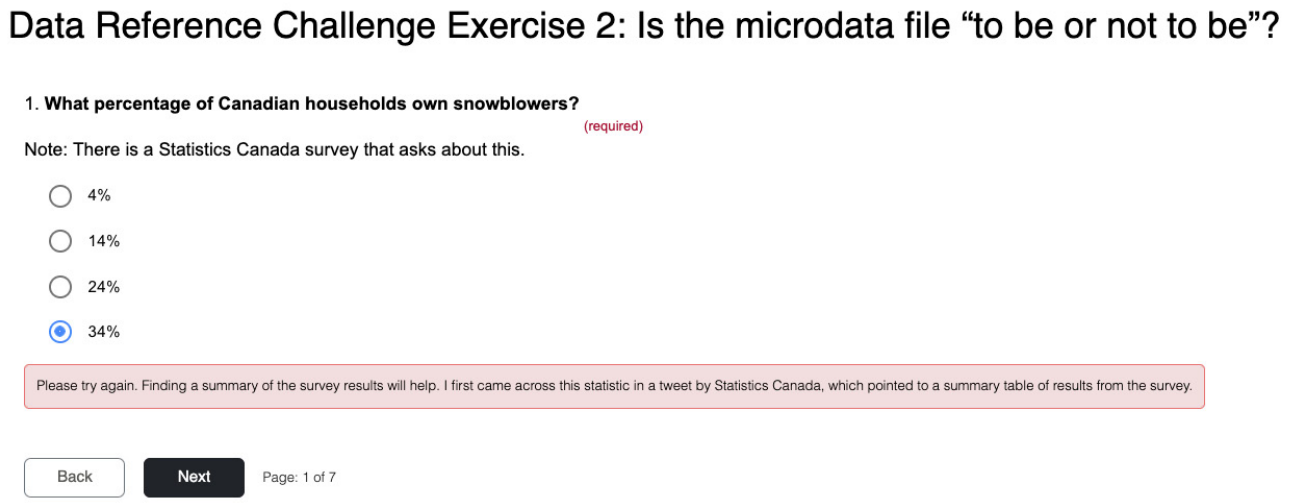
In addition to microdata, you might run into the term, "**aggregate data**." Aggregate data are "summary data" or compiled statistics. With aggregate data, you are one step removed from the raw data collected. Someone has summarized findings from the raw data for you. This summary could be in the form of a number, percentage, or table. Below are two examples of infographics produced by Statistics Canada that contain aggregate data:

- How does teleworking impact time use?
  - https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2024024-eng.htm
- Canadian potatoes, from farm to fork
  - https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2022086-eng.htm

Begin

An example of instructional content within a quiz.

own data reference questions after the tenth day of the challenge. I created the quizzes in SpringShare's LibWizard, already among our existing subscription tools, which is easy to use and allows you to immediately display feedback to the user when they submit an answer to a question.




An example of a quiz question, with feedback displayed after the quiz participant clicked on "Next." The following quiz question expands on the previous one, asking participants to identify the name of the survey that collects information about whether survey respondents owned a snowblower.

The aim of the challenge was to increase participants' comfort level in searching for data in a short period of time through frequent practice. I wanted to offer a fun way of job shadowing my data reference work while providing instruction that colleagues could use. Accounting for summer vacations and unexpected surprises, colleagues were given six weeks maximum to complete the challenge to receive free ice cream and a personalized certificate. Both were my individual thanks for participating. I also included a cheerleader (that is, an animated gif from Giphy) at the end of each quiz to congratulate colleagues on its completion and motivate them to keep going. Each quiz had a different cheerleader, who were characters from movies and fiction showing excitement or happiness. Four colleagues completed the 15-Day Data Reference Challenge out of seven who started. Another two colleagues made it halfway through before vacations and fall term preparations took priority. Completing the challenge was the equivalent of attending a full-day, hands-on workshop on data reference.

Each quiz included a comments box at the end to provide feedback, where colleagues confirmed that the quizzes did take less than thirty minutes to complete and asked clarifying questions. I wrote two of the quizzes before the challenge started and was writing the rest during the challenge itself. This worked in my favor in that it allowed me to make changes to the quizzes based on colleagues' feedback. For example, halfway through the challenge, I wrote and released a "mid-challenge review" exercise that discussed muddy points that had been mentioned in previous quizzes and addressed quiz questions that received more incorrect answers from participants. A few colleagues expressed enthusiasm for the challenge and one colleague communicated that their comfort level with answering data questions had increased after doing the challenge.

The 15-Day Data Reference Challenge included thirteen quizzes, with one quiz taking longer to complete and counting as three quizzes for days twelve to fourteen of the challenge because it required watching a one-hour conference presentation on finding data about

marginalized and underrepresented Canadians. The entire challenge took approximately fifty hours to create (about four hours per quiz), since this comprised writing the questions, finding the solutions, inputting each quiz in LibWizard, and testing the quiz before releasing it on the listserv. I repurposed most of the quiz content I created about Canada's Census of Population for a new workshop I taught to the McGill community in the summer and tweaked three of the quizzes to deliver as do-it-yourself (DIY) online learning activities for library users during Love Data Week 2025. I also plan to use the quizzes to train new colleagues in data reference and to offer the 15-Day Data Reference Challenge again. In writing the quiz questions, I also learned more details about some of the sources I use for data reference work.

## Professional Development at Your Own Institutions

The "Dear Data Library" column and 15-Day Data Reference Challenge are two examples of how I used reference questions I received from users to create training opportunities for my colleagues. The ideas for these two activities came from my experiences as a lifelong learner—from situations in which I was asked to complete assignments about what I was learning at the time. Other possible professional development activities along the same vein include the following:

- Start a search club in which a question is shared with the group before the meeting and everyone shares their search strategies during the meeting itself. Group members can take turns sharing questions and leading meetings. I once belonged to such a group, which met every month or so, and we all benefited from receiving exposure to different questions.
- Peer review answers to questions. My literature searches were peer-reviewed by my supervisor in my first professional position, increasing my skills tremendously in this area in a short period of time because I was able to connect their decades of experience in the field with the theory I learned in library school.
- Periodically meet with another professional to discuss issues in daily practice. I attended a synchronous, online, quantitative research methods course offered by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) in 2022, where I met another professional with similar interests. We both analyze data at our institutions to inform decision making as part of our position responsibilities. We attracted each other's attention through the questions we asked the course instructor, and we decided to continue meeting after the course. We have been meeting two to three times a semester online (we live in different Canadian provinces) to catch up and discuss how we are currently approaching the analysis of a specific dataset to answer a decision maker's question. Having an external perspective is refreshing and leads me to try other avenues in statistical analysis.

## Conclusion

My responsibilities and position titles have changed since I graduated from library school in what feels like eons ago, but answering questions has always remained a constant throughout, whether responding to library users or colleagues. Using the questions I have received to inform decisions about my own continuing education activities and to train other library professionals has become second nature to me as it aligns with my daily work and mirrors how I learn best—with hands-on practice. To conclude, this article has described several examples of activities that can be offered, or engaged in, to improve skills among library professionals. These activities are driven by user questions, which surround us and can be used to motivate our lifelong learning.

Anna Yang

# Exit Through the Breakout Room

## Rethinking Inclusive Engagement Online and in the Classroom

The saying "dropping like flies" was the only way to describe how folks dipped out of sessions at the Generative AI in Libraries (GAIL) Virtual Conference when the trigger word "breakout room." was mentioned by the speakers. As a moderator, it was shocking to see attendees flee for the hills simply because they were being asked to join group discussions. Mind you, these attendees are library folx and information professionals who are interested in and dedicated to learning more about generative artificial intelligence (AI) in libraries. Surely participating in a collaborative space like breakout rooms would be seen as an opportunity to hear more voices on the topic, yet folx are exiting the webinars. Now I won't sit here in my swivel chair and say that I've never left a webinar because I was being asked to participate in a group discussion. All I'm saying—or more like asking—is if we as information professionals are disengaging from breakout rooms, what do we expect from our own students when we put them into groups in the classroom? Our hope is that this will create a sense of community among the students, but is group work truly inclusive for engagement or is forced participation, regardless of the format, just intensifying social anxiety for all of us?

Let's take a step back and reset the stage for how I ended up in this conundrum. Recently I had the opportunity to moderate three sessions at GAIL, a virtual conference geared toward librarians who are interested in generative AI in libraries. Of the three sessions that I moderated, two of them included the breakout room format. The first session, titled "Librarian Attitude About the Environmental Impact of Generative AI," was heavily attended by more than ninety folx. It got to the point that one of the speakers had to help me let folx in while I introduced the presenters (thank you, Mandi!). It was a relatively straightforward session—the speakers set the stage about the environmental impact of AI and then threw the microphone to the attendees. As soon as the "Discussion" slide popped up on the screen, the attendance started to trickle down. By the time the speakers had finished giving instructions for the group discussion, there were about forty people remaining, including myself and the three speakers.

A similar occurrence happened at another session titled "Human in the Loop: How Much AI Oversight." I saw about fifty people come in and out of that session. As soon as the speaker mentioned the use of breakout rooms, that number fell drastically—down to eight. It was heartbreaking to see the speaker's work essentially go to waste. As an academic librarian, this made me reflect back on my own instruction. When I create an instruction session,

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I think very carefully about how I would like my students to engage with the class materials. Oftentimes my version of engagement includes group activities. Naturally I get mixed reviews on this format from my students. Some seem excited to talk to their classmates, and some will begrudgingly moan at me with the can-do attitude of "let's get this over with." I go into my instruction building thinking that I'm trying to create an inclusive environment for my students, but does group work really generate what I'm trying to get at? It dawned on me at that moment at GAIL that group discussions don't equal inclusive engagement. They might actually be creating discomfort for students, exasperating existing triggers like anxiety and imposter syndrome. Just like library professionals, students may not be interested in doing group work at all. If given the opportunity, I'm sure students would physically get up and leave my classroom too if I announced they would be working in groups.

As I sit in my cubicle looking at Frank, my skeleton cubemate, I'm left with the thought of *how can I create better engagement with inclusive design in mind, not just for attendees online but also for students in my physical classes?* I've had some success with think-pair-shares as it gets rid of the group work mentality, but there is still some sense of camaraderie because they still have to talk to one other person. Other activities like Padlet, polls, or—one of my favorite—"On a scale of cat, how are you feeling today" mood board can create space for anonymity but generate engagement from attendees (and hopefully some laughs).

Another method that we can consider is a "choose your level" of participation. While at the 2024 Library Assessment Conference, attendees had the option to sit at a table with a card that read "Low/No Engagement Table" or one that said open to engaging (I don't know the exact wording because I sat mainly at the low/no engagement table). This was such a small technique, but it immediately calmed my nerves. I knew I wanted to be out of my hotel room, but I also didn't have enough energy to converse with anyone (it was 7 a.m.!). This method could be applied to both an online webinar and in class. Rather than forcing participants to join a breakout room, speakers could set up a Padlet and ask attendees to spend the time to individually reply to the Padlet or join a breakout room and work together to discuss the question. In a similar sense, students can be instructed to either work individually or join a table/group to complete the activity.

I think it's safe for us to assume that if we use a breakout room in our webinars, about half of the attendees will leave. I want to stress that I don't think breakout rooms or group work in general are bad, but I do think they require more thoughtful consideration before use. Just like library folx entering an online webinar, students coming into our class may not know too much about the topic. Sometimes they want to be "talked at" because they're there to soak up information, not necessarily give it. If we are going to introduce group work in our instruction sessions, I think it's important to talk to the faculty member and ask about the class dynamic. Are they already in teams? Are students going to be required to complete a group project? This information might make the use of group work in our instruction sessions more acceptable. Another (and probably the most important) thing we should consider is what are the benefits of group discussions? Can we, as instructors or speakers, get the same type of engagement with our materials from individual work? If inclusive engagement is what we are actually striving for, then maybe what we should be emphasizing is belongingness within the materials and not necessarily forced collaboration, whether that's in a classroom or an online setting.

ACRL
Advancing learning
Transforming scholarship
Association of College & Research Libraries
A division of the American Library Association

# Annual Report

## 2024–2025





# Message from the President


## *Leo S. Lo*
***ACRL's 85th President***




Serving as ACRL president this past year has been a privilege I will always carry with me. What stands out most is the courage and creativity of our members. Every conversation, every committee meeting, every program reminded me that ACRL is not simply an association, but a community of people who believe deeply in the power of libraries to change lives. That belief, combined with action, is what makes us strong.

We are living in a time of disruption in higher education, and none more visible than the rise of artificial intelligence. AI is transforming research, teaching, and learning at a pace that is both exciting and unsettling. Recognizing this, I launched the ACRL Task Force on AI Competencies for Library Workers. Their charge was bold: to give our profession a framework, and a starting point, to engage responsibly, ethically, and practically with AI.

We also created an ACRL AI Discussion Group (which has now evolved into the ACRL AI Interest Group). It quickly became one of the most active spaces in our community. What I appreciated most was not just the exchange of ideas, but the willingness to wrestle with tensions: curiosity and caution, innovation and identity, efficiency and equity. These are not questions with easy answers, but they are exactly the questions our profession must take seriously if we want to lead, rather than follow, in this new era.

A highlight of the year was my Presidential Program at the ALA Annual Conference, "Demystifying AI: Navigating the Laws and Policies Shaping Our Digital Future." Keynote speaker Dr. Brandie Nonnecke challenged us to look past hype and fear, breaking down complex concepts with clarity and humor. She reminded us that bias in AI can be an opportunity for correction, not just a threat, and cautioned against falling for AI FOMO. The message was clear: libraries must adopt AI intentionally, guided by our values of equity, transparency, and privacy. I am grateful to the program planning committee for curating such a timely and urgent conversation.

At the same time, we faced the ongoing realities of financial challenges and shifts within ALA. These were not easy conversations, but they were necessary ones. I am grateful to the Board, the Budget & Finance Committee, and our dedicated staff for approaching them with honesty and pragmatism. In every discussion, our focus was clear: ACRL must

remain both financially sustainable and mission-driven, so we can continue to deliver value to our members.

Looking back, I am proud of the progress we made. But more importantly, I am hopeful about what lies ahead. I have seen members step into leadership, experiment with new approaches, and reimagine what libraries can be. The courage to try, the curiosity to question, and the commitment to community are all alive in this association.

The future of libraries will be shaped by how we respond to change. Technology will continue to evolve, budgets will fluctuate, and higher education will face pressures we cannot yet predict. But if this year taught me anything, it is that ACRL's members are ready. Ready to innovate, ready to advocate, and ready to lead with both vision and integrity.

It has been an honor to serve alongside you. Thank you for the trust you placed in me, and for reminding me, every day, why this work matters.

## ACRL Programs at the 2025 ALA Annual Conference —Philadelphia—

- 2025 President's Program — Demystifying AI: Navigating the Laws and Policies Shaping Our Digital Future
- AI Unleashed: Transforming Library Instruction and Research Support for the Future
- Beyond Mere Quantity: Why Current Approaches to EDI Further Embed Inequities
- Can It Happen Here? Book Challenges, Censorship, and Academic Freedom in Academic Libraries
- Citational Privilege: Disrupting the Patriarchy and Empowering Students Through Feminist Citation Practices
- Creating Accessible and User-friendly Black Genealogical Tools
- Creating Inclusive Library Spaces: Strategies for Implementing Sensory-Inclusive Programs and Resources

*(Annual Conference programs continued next page)*

# Annual Conference Programs

*(Annual Conference programs continued from previous page)*

- Creating Partnerships with Vendors: A collaborative approach to developing collections
- Enhancing student success through assessment tools: an interactive session
- Equity in Action: Academic Libraries' Roadmap to Closing Opportunity Gaps and Fostering Student Success
- Everything is All Reused: Teaching Academic Integrity Through the Lens of Pop Culture
- How Does Students' Cultural Capital Impact Their Information Literacy Skills? What the Data Tells Us
- Impact and Connection: How Structured Mentorship Effects the Success of BIPOC Librarians
- Libraries in action: Practical Approaches to Leverage Artificial Intelligence in the Research Lifecycle
- Loyalty or Survival? Understanding Trauma and Employee Commitment in Academic Libraries
- Navigating the Transition: Retirement and Succession Planning from Diverse Perspectives in Libraries
- Old Pages, New Tricks: AI-Powered Discovery and Instruction in Special Collections
- Poetry Stacked: Building 21st Century Programming in the Library
- Public History Meets Private Company: Digitizing a Historically Black University's Archival Photographs with Getty Images
- Reflective Teaching as a Catalyst for Change: Inspiring New Approaches in Library Instruction
- Staying CALM in Change: Effective Management for Academic Libraries
- Time for Something Different: Planning the Institute for Racial Equity Advancement in Libraries
- Update on the Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey

# Message from the Vice-President


## *Brad Warren*
***Vice-President/President-Elect***




It has been a true pleasure to serve in the past fiscal year as vice-president / president-elect of ACRL this year. It has been a year of changes and milestones for ACRL and ALA, and I am so thankful for the dedication and outstanding work of the ACRL staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers to continue our mission and essential work. During the year, we continued to make significant progress in some areas that I would like to highlight.

I am pleased and honored to have worked with our Board and ACRL staff to ensure the ongoing health and stability of both our organization and ALA. In particular, we worked diligently to ensure that our members' interests were represented in ongoing negotiations with ALA's operations and budgets in a significantly challenging financial environment. We are dedicated to ensuring that our nearly 150-year-old organization can remain thriving and strong while also ensuring that ACRL can meet the needs and interest of the academic library community. I am also pleased that we were able to restart our awards programs after they went into hiatus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board met in October 2024 to conduct strategic planning sessions for the first time in several years. We looked closely at our work, goals, values, and initiatives to ensure that we are remaining current and looking toward the future for new challenges. In that planning, I was pleased that work to evaluate and enhance our Benchmark survey product rose as a key goal area for our organization. As I continue in my presidency, it is my hope that work on this will allow for capturing academic library data elements discontinued from IPEDS reporting while also determining how best to capture salary information and other topical areas of interest for future surveys. Ensuring our members have accurate and timely information that informs our various missions and provides tools for benefiting our members personally is one of my goals in the next year.

In response to significant attacks in 2025 to higher education, IMLS, and academic freedom, I co-led two separate town hall events for our members to reflect, share, and be with each other in these challenging times. It has become clear that the need to advocate outside the walls of our institutions is a significant area for development, and one that I hope to address in my presidency year. I am so pleased that feedback from ACRL members who participated in these events has been positive along with a desire to host more of these forums in the future.

# Message from the Vice-President

A significant responsibility during the vice-presidential year is setting all the various appointments for committees and other groups for the 2025–26 year. I am pleased to report that we once again had an outstanding turnout of volunteers who have agreed to serve on a multitude of committees that reflect our values. I also am looking forward to partnering with ALA leadership, the Office of Intellectual Freedom and the Public Policy and Advocacy Office to provide best practices, tools, and workshops to ensure greater advocacy efforts and success for our members at the individual level.

Finally, I have the unique pleasure of helping onboard not only our new ACRL Executive Director Teresa Anderson, but our new ALA Executive Director, Daniel Montgomery. We are facing a unique set of challenges with our organization and industries of learning, higher education, and libraries. I am excited to be part of this work and harnessing the energy of new leadership and initiatives to ensure that our work can continue strongly into the future. I know that all of this is possible because of the dedicated ACRL staff and fantastic ACRL member volunteers. I have greatly enjoyed my first year with the Board and am excited for the achievements we will accomplish in the next year!

# Message from the Executive Director

***Teresa Anderson***
***ACRL Executive Director***



It has been a great pleasure to serve as your ACRL executive director this year. Since I joined ACRL in May 2025, I have been impressed with the dedication of the volunteer leadership and the resilience of the staff team. In promoting and supporting ACRL's Plan for Excellence, I have been able to work closely with the dedicated volunteers on the ACRL Board of Directors and ACRL Budget and Finance Committee as well as many section leaders and heads of the goal area committees.

This year, ACRL events, where members can network and learn from each other, have been the highlight of the association's programming year. The ACRL 2025 Conference was held from April 2–5 in Minneapolis and online and was a rousing success by all accounts and metrics. An additional standout this year was the sold-out Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) 2025 Conference, held June 24–27 at Yale University and online. The successful re-launch of the ACRL Immersion Program took place July 23–25, at Loyola University in Chicago. The program has been on hiatus since 2020 due to the pandemic but returned to a sold-out audience. Two members of the facilitator team presented a half-day workshop at the Sharjah International Library Conference in Sharjah, UAE. The workshop presented a great opportunity to extend ACRL's reach with an international audience and fostered dialogue around transformative teaching practices.

ACRL publications also had a successful year. The online versions of ACRL's three Chicago based serials had nearly 7,500,000 visits, providing engaging content for a wide swath of the profession. The association published 17 new books, providing many academic librarians with the publishing opportunity they need for career advancement. Our bestselling book of the year was *The Small to Mid-Size Academic Library: Collaborations and Outreach*, which is the beginning of a new ACRL book series.

In addition to the continued success of the publications at Choice, that team's sponsored content program was a standout this year. The AI literacy micro course, "AI Literacy Essentials for Academic Libraries," produced in partnership with Clarivate, generated engagement around the new ACRL AI Competencies for Academic Library Workers. More than 7,500 academic librarians and faculty members signed up for this course with robust engagement throughout the entire eight weeks.

# Message from the Executive Director

This year has been a difficult one for both libraries and librarianship given an uncertain political climate and ongoing funding crises. ALA has not been immune to these pressures. A reorganization and staffing changes have made this year especially challenging. However, as evidenced by ACRL's successes this year, and with new ALA leadership in Executive Director Dan Montgomery, the hope for the future remains bright as we move into a new year.

Special recognition goes to the ACRL staff team for all of their help in easing my transition. And my heartfelt thanks to the volunteer leaders who have been gracious with their time and patient with my onboarding. I look forward to ACRL's continued success.

FRIENDS OF ACRL

3 ways to give!

Advancement Fund

RBMS Scholarships Fund

ACRL Conference Scholarship Fund

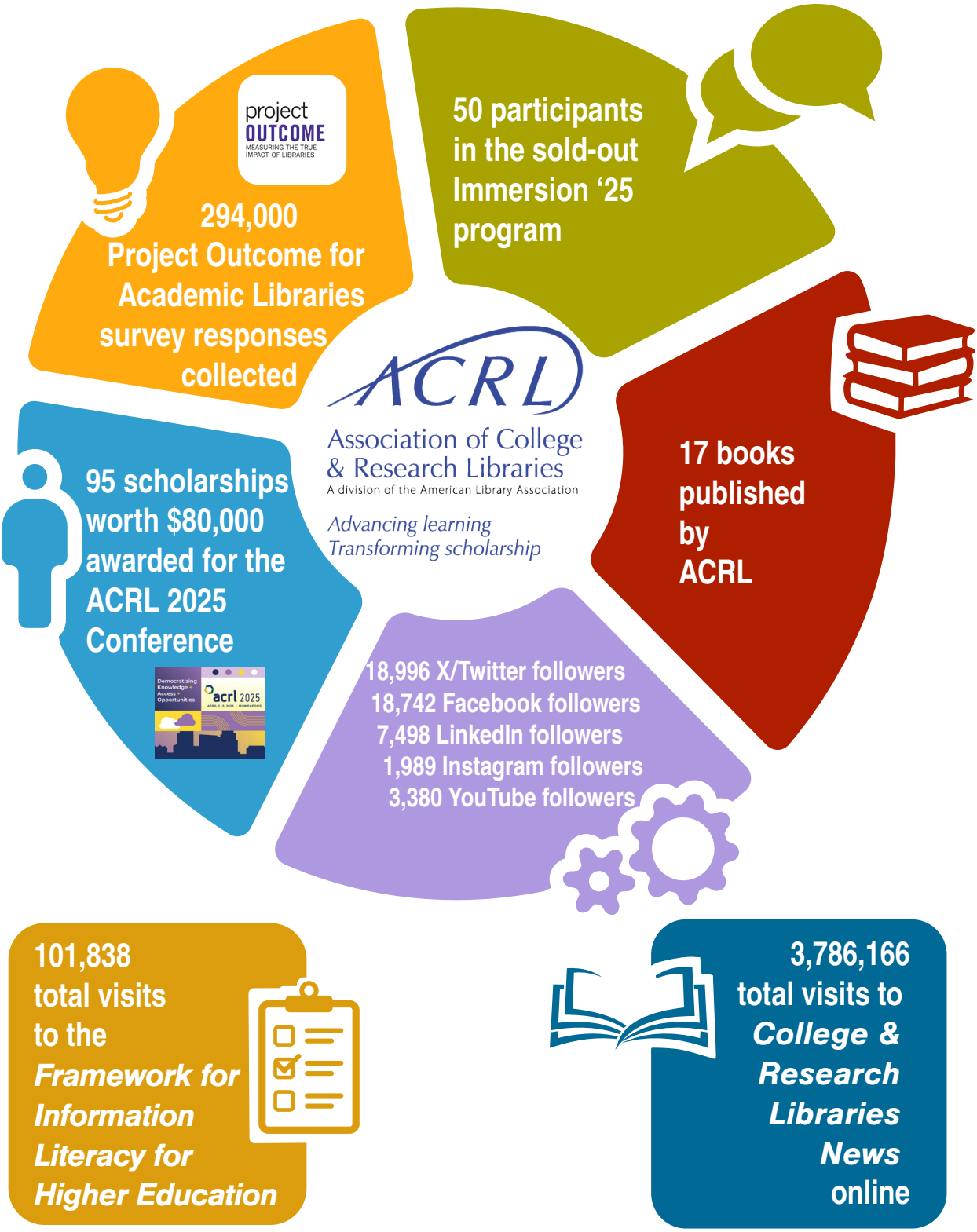
http://www.ala.org/acrl/give

The Friends of ACRL donations support ACRL's mission in key areas, including the ACRL Advancement Fund, ACRL Conference Scholarship Fund, and RBMS Scholarships Fund. Since the establishment of the Friends of ACRL in 1998, 1,574 donors have become Friends and contributed more than $605,000 to provide support for ACRL initiatives. Money from the Friends Funds has been used to provide scholarships for ACRL professional development activities, support for the Library Copyright Alliance Project, Project Outcome, Benchmark: ACRL Metrics & Trends, and providing open access for *C&RL News* backfiles.

Thanks to our 93 donors who contributed more than $40,000 to the Friends of ACRL in FY25 (September 1, 2024–August 31, 2025). A complete list of Friends of ACRL is available on the ACRL website at https://www.ala.org/acrl/friends-acrl-2025.

ACRL also expresses its sincere appreciation to its sponsors for their generous donations to the various programs and events the association has offered throughout the year. Thanks to your support, ACRL members benefited from enhanced programs and services this year.

# By the Numbers



# Year in Review

## Teresa Anderson Named ACRL Executive Director, Allison Payne Promoted to Associate Director

Teresa Anderson became the executive director of ACRL, beginning May 19, 2025. A Certified Association Executive (CAE), Anderson has spent more than three decades at ASIS International, a professional organization for security management professionals. Within ASIS, Anderson has held several positions, most recently as vice president, innovation and outreach. Anderson created cross functional teams to develop and execute product strategies that align with market needs and company goals, resulting in an annual revenue increase. She also cultivated strategic partnerships in alignment with business objectives and growth strategies. She oversaw content strategy, guiding the editorial team in curating content around products and services.

Allison Payne, who served as interim executive director beginning in 2023, was promoted to associate director, operations and strategic initiatives. In this role, she manages and implements special programs and projects, including those pertaining to ACRL's equity, diversity and inclusion goal area; reviews, develops, and updates policy; and serves as a leader for ACRL operations and efficiency. Payne also continues to manage ACRL's governance functions by supporting the work of the ACRL Board of Directors and ACRL Budget and Finance Committee.

## ACRL Conference

The ACRL 2025 Conference was held April 2–5, 2025, in Minneapolis and virtually. Themed Democratizing Knowledge, Access, and Opportunities, ACRL 2025 provided a platform to engage in critical conversations and explore solutions-centered approaches to the challenges facing our profession, focusing on themes like embedded bias, inclusive excellence, and the role of technology. The conference was a programmatic and financial success, hosting 2,434 paid in-person and 569 paid virtual attendees. Additional details on ACRL 2025 are available later in this report.

# Year in Review

## ACRL and Artificial Intelligence

One of ACRL's key achievements this year was the creation of the ACRL AI Competencies for Library Workers Task Force, charged with developing a comprehensive framework for AI literacy among library workers. Following a year of hard work, the competencies were approved by the ACRL Board of Directors in October 2025. The association also launched the new ACRL Artificial Intelligence Discussion Group this year, providing a vital platform for dialogue, learning, and community-building around emerging AI technologies and their implications for academic libraries.

Another significant milestone was securing a grant from Elsevier to support AI literacy initiatives specifically aimed at librarians from under-resourced libraries. This partnership reflects ACRL's ongoing commitment to equity, accessibility, and workforce development in librarianship, aligning with our broader mission of empowering library professionals with skills essential for the future.

The President's Program at the 2025 ALA Annual Conference, "Demystifying AI: Navigating the Laws and Policies Shaping Our Digital Future," featured Brandie Nonnecke, senior director of policy for Americans for Responsible Innovation and founding director of the CITRIS Policy Lab. Nonnecke broke down the fundamentals of AI, dispelled common misconceptions, and explored the rapidly evolving legal and policy landscape surrounding this transformative technology. A variety of ACRL and Choice publications and online learning opportunities provided additional opportunities to learn about the impact of AI.

## ACRL's Plan for Excellence

This report highlights ACRL's many accomplishments during the 2024–25 fiscal year across the five strategic goal areas highlighted in the Plan for Excellence—the value of academic libraries; student learning; research and scholarly environment; new roles and changing landscapes; and equity, diversity, and inclusion—along with the association's enabling programs and services.

# Year in Review

## *The Value of Academic Libraries*

ACRL made significant progress on the association's goal of assisting academic libraries in demonstrating alignment with, and impact on, institutional outcomes this year. The association provides support and training to ACRL liaisons to other higher education organizations and disciplinary societies so that they are prepared to talk about the value of academic libraries in those contexts.

Project Outcome for Academic Libraries continues to be a vital part of our Value initiatives. Based on a model developed by PLA, this free toolkit is designed to help academic libraries understand and share the impact of essential library programs and services by providing simple surveys and an easy-to-use process for measuring and analyzing outcomes. The standardized surveys allow libraries to aggregate their outcome data and analyze trends by topic and program type. As of September 2025, Project Outcome for Academic Libraries has 6,299 users and 1,027 academic libraries have created surveys and collected more than 294,000 responses.

ACRL's Standards for Libraries in Higher Education (SLHE), another important component of our Value of Academic Libraries work, has been visited nearly 9,000 times this year. At the request of the ACRL Board of Directors, the VAL Committee began the process of reviewing and revising the Standards for Libraries in Higher Education. The review and revision process is scheduled for completion in June 2025.

The virtual workshops "Putting the Standards for Libraries in Higher Education into Action" and "Assessment in Action: Demonstrating and Communicating Library Contributions to Student Learning and Success" continue to help academic library professionals tackle value and assessment issues facing the profession today.

Developed by a joint task force comprised of members from the VAL and New Roles and Changing Landscapes Committees, the ACRL Academic Library Advocacy Toolkit is a curated collection of resources that can help equip academic library administrators and library professionals with the resources they need to advocate for the value, roles, and contributions of academic libraries to their campus communities. The toolkit has garnered nearly 5,500 views this year.

The Learning Analytics Toolkit, a freely available professional development resource developed by the VAL Committee, provides an avenue for library professionals to learn more about learning analytics and how they intersect with academic libraries. This year saw nearly 1,000 visits to the toolkit.

***National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System/ACRL Benchmark***

The ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey incorporates the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Academic Library Component and makes the results available through ACRL Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends. The 2024 survey closed on April 11, 2025. 1,387 institutions completed the 2024 survey for a 39% response rate, and the survey data, including trends library support for open initiatives, is expected to be published in fall 2025. The survey also enabled participants to easily transfer their IPEDS responses to the institutional keyholder for the IPEDS survey. The 2025 ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics, open until spring 2026, features trends questions focusing on Artificial Intelligence in libraries.

## *Student Learning*

The following activities are examples of ways ACRL moved towards meeting the association's goal of assisting librarians in transforming student learning, pedagogy, and instructional practices through creative and innovative collaborations during the fiscal year.

The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education has introduced a new way of thinking and practicing to the academic library community and continues to bring both inspiration and challenge to librarians as they explore new directions in information literacy practice and research.

Based on the ACRL Framework, Threshold Achievement Test for Information Literacy (TATIL) is a simple, easy-to-use standardized test that measures the achievement of the information literacy education outcomes, regardless of a student's major or research focus, across four modules which address learning across all the frames. TATIL reports help educators identify student areas of strength and areas that need improvement, supporting




evidence-based decision-making and inform actions for strengthening student outcomes. Following a redesign and rebuilding period, TATIL relaunched under the ACRL brand in summer 2023. As of September 2025, TATIL has been used by 24 schools to administer 155 tests and collected 28,172 responses.

The ACRL Framework Sandbox, an openly accessible platform and repository for librarians and their educational partners to discover, share, collect and use ongoing work related to the ACRL Framework in practice and professional development, was visited more than 70,000 times in this period. The Framework itself was viewed nearly 100,000 times this year.

At the request of the ACRL Board of Directors, the Student Learning and Information Literacy Committee (SLILC) and Instruction Section began collaborating to review and revise the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy. Work on the project is ongoing with the review and revision process scheduled for completion by June 2026.

ACRL published several books including *Instructional Design for Teaching Information Literacy Online: A Student-Centered Approach*; *Student Success Librarianship: Critical Perspectives on an Evolving Profession*; and *Training Library Instructors* related to student learning and information literacy issues this year.

The association also presented a variety of Online Learning offerings focused on student learning and information literacy topics, including "Exploring AI with Critical Information Literacy," "Building an Information Literacy Micro-Course in Six Weeks," "Developing Information Literacy and AI Guidelines: Blazing a New Trail," and "Training Library Instructors." SLILC continued to support librarian researchers by hosting the panel "Getting Started with Researching & Writing in Academic Librarianship" in June 2025. The RoadShow workshop "Engaging with the ACRL Framework: A Catalyst for Exploring and Expanding Our Teaching Practices" continues to help academic library professionals tackle student learning-related issues facing the profession today.

Perspectives on the Framework, a column focusing on the Framework and edited by SLILC, continues to appear bimonthly in *C&RL News*. Column topics this year have included "Is This AI Tool Right for Me? Important Questions from the Framework," "Only One Information Ecosystem, or Many? Examining How Information Privilege in the Framework Impacts International Students," "Surveillance and Privacy: How Can

the Framework Support Privacy Literacy?," "ACCentuating Epistemology in the ACC Frame: A Case for Integrating Personal and Discipline-Specific Epistemologies into the ACRL Framework," and "Resisting Neoliberalism via Information Literacy Instruction."

### *Information Literacy Immersion Program*

The ACRL Immersion Program relaunched July 23–25, 2025, at Loyola University in Chicago. The program, which had been on hiatus since 2020 due to the pandemic, returned to a sold-out audience of 50 participants. Immersion '25 provided participants with a 2.5-day immersive learning experience. Participants had the opportunity to reflect on core issues related to teaching and learning in libraries while engaging with Immersion's four foundational pillars: information literacy, librarians as teachers, leadership, and critical reflective practice. The curriculum offered a mix of plenary and breakout sessions, cohort meetings, and an interactive charette.

## *Research and Scholarly Environment*

ACRL's scholarly communication program actively promotes a commitment to the greater good through the transition to a more open system of scholarship.

The free, virtual ACRL/SPARC Forum "Learning from Libraries' Growing Experience with Unbundling" was held in September 2024. The forum explored the increasing depth of experience libraries have with unbundling and how this experience can help institutions that may wish to consider a similar path. Conversation touched on how libraries prepared for their negotiations that led to unbundling or going out of contract, what their strategies have been to support their campuses in continuing to access the articles they need, and how they have used the often-significant savings each has realized.

Regular articles on scholarly communication issues and trends in *C&RL News* play an important role in disseminating a body of knowledge for the field. ACRL also published the book *Data Culture in Academic Libraries: A Practical Guide to Building Communities, Partnerships, and Collaborations* and *The Open Science Cookbook* this year.

The Scholarly Communication Toolkit, developed and maintained by the Research and Scholarly Environment Committee, continues to provide content and context on a broad range of scholarly communications topics and offers resources and tools for the practitioner. The freely available toolkit features sections on topics such as fair use, public

access mandates, and library publishing in addition to more fully developed sections on open access publishing and repositories. The toolkit has been visited more than 15,000 times this year.

The ACRL Scholarly Communication Discussion Group and Scholcomm discussion list continue to be important venues for strengthening the association's role in supporting new models of scholarly communication.

*"I value being a part of the work that supports my librarian colleagues through the committee work that I do as a part of the Research and Scholarly Environment Committee. Our work is important to the field of scholarly communication, and I have learned so much from other committee members along the way."*

– Christina M. Miskey,
ACRL Member of the Week



## *New Roles and Changing Landscapes*

The New Roles and Changing Landscapes (NRCL) goal focuses on assisting the academic and research library workforce in effectively navigating change in higher education environments.

ACRL's virtual, nine-week 2025 Fostering Change for Academic Library Leaders cohort was held from Monday, May 26 – Friday, July 25, 2025. The cohort aims to build a community of change agents in academic libraries. In this cohort experience, participants gain the tools to spark, lead, and sustain change no matter their organizational position along with a network of peers to lean on as they lead change. Participants leave the cohort with a toolkit of change leadership practices that will help them take their library from where it is today to a new imagined future.

The NRCL Library Spaces team launched a new Creating Welcoming Spaces in Academic Libraries Guide in May and garnered nearly 12,500 views through the end of the fiscal year. This freely available resource is designed for library staff in academic libraries to highlight the importance of inviting and welcoming environments for all library users.

NRCL's Trend Talks subcommittee, in collaboration with the VAL Committee, is presenting an ACRL online forum, "Smart Tools, Smarter Librarians: Conversations about Libraries and AI, in March 2025. The four-part Online Learning series "Toward Inclusive Academic Librarian Hiring Practices" was also held this year focusing on the changing professional environment.

At the request of the ACRL Board of Directors, the NRCL Committee is additionally working with the VAL Committee to review and update six ACRL documents related to the status of academic librarians — Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians; Statement on the Certification and Licensing of Academic Librarians; Statement on the Terminal Professional Degree for Academic Librarian; Standard for the Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Academic Librarians; Standards for Academic Librarians without Faculty Status, and Standards for Faculty for Academic Libraries.

The RoadShow workshop "Open Educational Resources and Affordability" continues to help academic library professionals interested in learning about OER and/or developing OER initiatives.

### *ACRL Consulting Services*

Delivered by a knowledgeable, experienced team of consultants, ACRL Consulting Services works with libraries to design and assist with library reviews and planning activities, organizational change and development initiatives, staff retreats, and campus collaborations. The program successfully relaunched this year through the leadership of new program manager Ari Zickau.

## *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*

As the higher education association for librarians, ACRL is dedicated to creating diverse and inclusive communities in the association and in academic and research libraries. This core commitment permeates the work of the association, cutting across all ACRL sections, committees, interest and discussion groups, and communities of practice by acknowledging and addressing historical racial inequities; challenging oppressive systems within academic libraries; valuing different ways of knowing; and identifying and working to eliminate barriers to equitable services, spaces, resources, and scholarship. This commitment permeated all aspects of the association during this fiscal year.

As part of this commitment, the association provided free ALA/ACRL memberships for the second year of ALA and ACRL Membership Funding for library workers who identify as BIPOC and/or as persons with disabilities. Of the 40 selected awardees for the two-year cohort, 33 accepted in 2024 and 28 accepted in 2025.

ACRL published three books — *Creating an Inclusive Library: Approaches for Increasing Engagement and Use with Students of Color*; *From Interrogation to Integration: Centering Social Justice in Special Collections, Archives, and Preservation*; and *Supporting Neurodiverse Students in Academic Libraries* — on EDI-related topics this year. The Academic Library Workers in Conversation column in *C&RL News* focuses on minimizing barriers to traditional publishing with an accessible format through the sharing of conversations about transforming libraries with ideas from the frontlines, often focusing on EDI-related topics. The three-part Online Learning series "Toward Inclusive Academic Librarian Hiring Practices" was also held this year focusing on increasing diversity in the profession was also held this year.

The ACRL Dr. E.J. Josey Spectrum Scholar Mentor Committee awarded seven ALA Spectrum Scholars who expressed interest in academic librarianship with travel grants to the ACRL 2025 Conference, providing them with the opportunity to participate in professional development activities at the conference and to expand their network of colleagues who work in academic and research libraries. The mentoring program has also matched more than 200 pairs of mentors and Scholars since its establishment in 2003.

The ACRL Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion LibGuide contains a wealth of information on ways we have implemented the association's Core Commitment, including the ACRL Diversity Alliance; standards and guidelines; information on conference and online learning programming; links to books, articles, and other publications focusing on EDI topics; a calendar of association activities; and suggestions on ways to get involved in this important work.



*"I've been on ACRL's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee the last two years focusing on awarding ACRL memberships to library workers and students who identify as BIPOC and/or disabled. My committee members have been amazing, and I'm continually inspired by colleagues across ACRL's network."*

– Mandy Choie, ACRL Member of the Week

### *ACRL Diversity Alliance*

The ACRL Diversity Alliance unites academic libraries who share a commitment to increase the hiring pipeline of qualified, talented individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. The ACRL Diversity Alliance grew out of an initiative led by founding members American University, the University of Iowa, Virginia Tech, and West Virginia University.

## *Enabling Programs and Services*

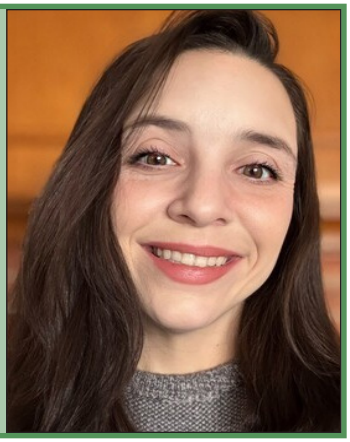
In addition to the five Plan for Excellence goal areas, ACRL serves its members, along with the academic and research library community, through a wide variety of programs and services. Highlights of the regularly recurring operations relevant to the ability of ACRL to lead academic and research librarians and libraries in advancing learning and scholarship are reported below.

### *Member Engagement*

ACRL's membership activities build on retaining core membership while recruiting from new and diverse communities. At the end of the fiscal year, ACRL had 8,088 members. The association continues to look for ways to partner with ALA to enhance member recruitment and retention efforts.

*"What I value most about ACRL is the sense of community. When I first started my career as a librarian straight out of my MLIS program I did not have a large professional network, and I felt a bit lost when it came to my first real, professional job. I joined an interest group for History Librarians and met so many wonderful people at different stages in their careers in libraries across the country."*

– Taylor Ralph, ACRL Member of the Week



ACRL sections offer 15 vibrant and dynamic communities that nurture individual development and foster a deeper connection to the profession. Sections continue to offer successful mentoring opportunities along with programming and social events to create community among new and continuing members. In addition, ACRL's 14 interest groups

address emerging areas of interest in academic librarianship, and our 18 discussion groups provide avenues for members to connect around issues through informal networks for exchanging ideas and problem-solving.

ACRL's social media presence continues to grow to provide membership with a variety of avenues to connect with colleagues and the association. The association held a virtual orientation session this summer for incoming leaders and offered a webcast to help members volunteer for ACRL committees. A number of ACRL committees, interest groups, discussion groups, sections, and the Board of Directors are working virtually and taking advantage of ALA Connect and other virtual meeting systems to keep the work of the association moving forward year-round.

### *ACRL Committee Members 2024–25*

The association is pleased to acknowledge the ACRL leaders and volunteers who have worked hard to move the profession and the association forward in 2024–25. ACRL could not accomplish as much as it does without the passionate commitment and expertise of its volunteers. Thanks to all the member volunteers for their service.

### *Awards*

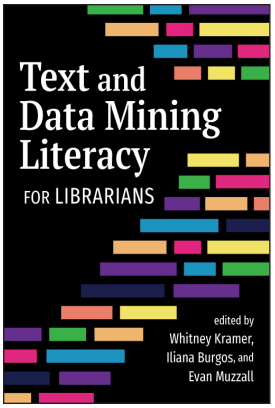
Since 1923, the ACRL Awards Program has recognized and honored the professional contributions and achievements of academic libraries and librarians. This special recognition by ACRL enhances the sense of personal growth and accomplishment of our members, provides our membership with role models, and strengthens the image of our membership in the eyes of employers, leadership, and the academic community.

This year, work continued on the recommendations of the ACRL Awards Process Implementation Task Force. Each award committee has reviewed the description, selection criteria, and selection process for the award(s) it juries and the ACRL Awards Coordinating Committee has been reviewing reports and providing feedback. The committee has been developing procedures for the review process and training and two open-house sessions for awards committee members were held to inform the progress of the new awards procedure and receive feedback. A new portal for ACRL awards was developed to provide a collaborative space for the award committees to find materials and updated nomination forms. This portal will be used in the 2025–26 program year when issuing awards will resume.

# Year in Review

## *Publications*

### *Monographs*




ACRL's monograph publishing program was very active during 2024–25, releasing 17 new books. Titles focused on information literacy, open science, innovative workplaces, advocacy and public policy, supporting neurodiverse students, community college libraries, and more. A complete list of titles is available in the table on page 503.

The full back catalog of ACRL monograph publications is available in a variety of formats through the ALA Store and Amazon. E-books of ACRL monograph titles are also available for purchase by libraries through EBSCO and ProQuest.

### *Serials*




ACRL continues to make enhancements to the online versions of ACRL's *College & Research Libraries* (*C&RL*), *College & Research Libraries News* (*C&RL News*), and *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* in the Open Journal Systems (OJS) platform.

Michelle Demeter, head of instruction and undergraduate services at New York University, began an initial three-year term as editor of *College and Research Libraries* on July 1, 2025, succeeding Kristen Totleben.

### *ALA JobLIST*

ALA JobLIST is the online career center for job seekers and employers in library and information science and technology run cooperatively by ACRL's *C&RL News* and ALA's *American Libraries* magazines. Reflecting the financial and political challenges faced by public and academic libraries, the number of job ads posted in 2024–25 fell more than 20% compared to the previous year for the second year in a row, following record-setting years in FY22 and FY23. JobLIST maintains a very high profile in the LIS job market, but ad volume varies as that market is affected by external economic forces.

Staff continue to work with JobLIST's platform provider to develop improvements to the service to serve job seekers and employers well regardless of the hiring

environment, which included the integration of some basic artificial intelligence features to summarize job ads and provide insights to help guide potential candidates as they apply. An ACRL staff member serves as a leading member of the provider's customer advisory board to offer direct feedback and ideas to the platform's product development team.

By providing employers with an effective, competitively priced means of reaching the most qualified and engaged candidates in the profession with their opportunities, revenue earned by ALA JobLIST helps to fund programs and initiatives throughout ACRL and ALA, including a direct contribution to the ALA Office for Human Resource Development and Recruitment (HRDR) in support of the ALA JobLIST Placement and Career Development Center at the ALA Annual Conference and ACRL conference.

*CHOICE*

Choice continues to provide the academic library community with recommendations on what to read, what to collect, and how to navigate the constantly changing information technology landscape. This year focused on producing content around integrating generative AI into scholarly and library workflows.

Choice Reviews was first to market in reviewing generative AI products for higher education as part of its reviews on digital resources. The Choice editorial team developed a rubric to assist in evaluating AI resources, and we recruited reviewers who are already working in promoting AI for scholarly workflows at their own institutions. To further bolster its position in the profession, Choice hosted a panel on AI assessment at the Charleston Conference in November 2024. This panel included two library workers (including one of our reviewers), two members of the Choice editorial team, and our editorial consultant. A similar panel was hosted at the ACRL 2025 Conference in Minneapolis.

Choice's library technology blog, LibTech Insights (LTI), and EDI blog, Toward Inclusive Excellence (TIE), both publish content around issues in generative AI ethics, algorithmic bias, information literacy, and product assessment. The library vendor community has noticed our commitment to this topic and has responded with increased advertising around AI in Choice products. For example, this summer, Choice partnered with Clarivate to create the AI Literacy Essentials for Academic Libraries eight-week micro course. This self-paced email-based course, which attracted nearly 8,000 registrants, draws on ACRL's newly drafted AI Competencies for Academic Library Workers.

# Year in Review

## ACRL Publications

### *New ACRL Books in 2024–25*

- *Assessment and Advocacy: Using Project Outcome for Academic Libraries*
- *Closing a College Library*
- *The Community College Library: Collections and Technical Services*
- *Creating an Inclusive Library: Approaches for Increasing Engagement and Use with Students of Color*
- *Critical Perspectives on an Evolving Profession; and Training Library Instructors (Two Volume Set)*
- *Data Culture in Academic Libraries: A Practical Guide to Building Communities, Partnerships, and Collaborations*
- *From Interrogation to Integration: Centering Social Justice in Special Collections, Archives, and Preservation*
- *Innovative Library Workplaces: Transformative Human Resource Strategies*
- *Instructional Design for Teaching Information Literacy Online: A Student-Centered Approach*
- *Legislative Advocacy and Public Policy Work for Academic and Research Library Workers*
- *The Open Science Cookbook*
- *The Small to Mid-Size Academic Library: Collaborations and Outreach*
- *Student Success Librarianship*
- *Supporting Diversity through Collection Evaluation, Development, and Weeding: CLIPP #48*
- *Supporting Neurodiverse Students in Academic Libraries*
- *Valuing the Community College Library: Impactful Practices for Institutional Success*

### *ACRL Serials*

- *College & Research Libraries* (https://crl.acrl.org) – The official open access, online-only scholarly research journal of ACRL.
- *College & Research Libraries News* (https://crln.acrl.org) – Publishes articles on the latest trends and practices affecting academic and research libraries and serves as the official newsmagazine and publication of record of ACRL.

*(Publications continued next page)*

(Publications continued from previous page)

- *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* (https://rbm.acrl.org) – ACRL's journal covering issues pertaining to special collections libraries and cultural heritage institutions.

### *CHOICE Publications*

- *Choice* magazine — Each monthly issue offers 600 new reviews, a bibliographic essay, and upcoming titles worth knowing.
- *Choice* Reviews on Cards — Choice reviews, and just the reviews, on cards.
- Choice Reviews — The completely rebuilt Choice Reviews gives subscribers immediate access to a comprehensive archive of nearly 200,000 reviews representing a quarter-century of scholarship.
- Resources for College Libraries — Copublished with ProQuest, Resources for College Libraries helps undergraduate institutions identify the essential titles for learning.

### *Blogs/Online Publications*

- ACRL Insider (https://acrl.ala.org/acrlinsider) — ACRL Insider keeps the world current and informed on ACRL activities, services, and programs.
- ACRL LibGuides (https://acrl.libguides.com) — ACRL LibGuides allow membership units to advance the work of ACRL by providing resources for the profession, such as toolkits and bibliographies.
- ACRLog (https://acrlog.org/) — The issues blog of ACRL features posts on current issues in academic and research librarianship from the blog team.
- *Keeping Up With…*(https://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/keeping_up_with) — Online current awareness publication featuring concise briefs on trends in academic librarianship and higher education.

### *ACRL Social Media*

- Bluesky (bsky.app/profile/ala-acrl.bsky.social)
- Facebook (www.facebook.com/ala.acrl)
- Instagram (www.instagram.com/ala_acrl)
- LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/company/alaacrl/)
- Threads (www.threads.net/@ala_acrl)
- Twitter/X (www.twitter.com/ALA_ACRL)
- YouTube (www.youtube.com/user/ALAACRL/)

# Year in Review

*Reports, Papers, Online Publications*

Every two years, the ACRL Research Planning and Review Committee releases an environmental scan of higher education, including developments with the potential for continuing impact on academic libraries. The 2025 Environmental Scan, released this April, provides a broad review of the current higher education landscape, with special focus on the state of academic and research libraries. The document builds on earlier ACRL reports, including the Top Trends in Academic Libraries, published every other June in *C&RL News*.

Keeping Up With…, ACRL's online current awareness publication series, continued issuing concise briefs on trends in academic librarianship and higher education. Each edition focuses on a single issue including an introduction to the topic and summaries of key points, including implications for academic libraries. The series' offerings this year included information on Public Scholarship, Neurodiversity, Small Teaching, Constructive Dialogue, Inclusive Recruitment and Hiring Practices, Zines, Empathetic Design, and Research Information Management Systems, along with highlighting ACRL activities.

*Standards, Guidelines, and Frameworks*

The development of standards and guidelines for all areas of academic and research librarianship is a core service of ACRL. These standards, guidelines, and frameworks are a key ACRL contribution to the profession. The ACRL Board of Directors approved revised Characteristics of Programs of Information Literacy that Illustrate Best Practices: A Guideline this year. Review and revision of several of our documents, including the Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education and the Standards for Libraries in Higher Education are ongoing and expected to be completed during the 2025–26 program year.



*"Ever since I first joined ACRL as a graduate student, I've looked to the association for professional guidance and growth. I value ACRL's documentation of principles, such as the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education and the Standards for Libraries in Higher Education, for reflecting our shared ethos while also inviting critical dialogue of academic librarianship."*

– Kristin E. C. Green,
ACRL Member of the Week

# Year in Review

## *Education*

ACRL continues to offer a wide range of professional development programs and events to meet the needs of today's academic and research librarians.

### *ACRL Conference*

The ACRL 2025 Conference was held April 2–5, 2025, in Minneapolis and virtually. Themed Democratizing Knowledge, Access, and Opportunities, ACRL 2025 provided a platform to engage in critical conversations and explore solutions-centered approaches to the challenges facing our profession, focusing on themes like embedded bias, inclusive excellence, and the role of technology. The conference featured keynote speakers Ruha Benjamin and Saeed Jones with more than 500 live educational programs including invited presentations, panel sessions, contributed papers, workshops, lightning talks, roundtable discussions, and poster sessions, along with 28 virtual-only sessions.

The conference was a programmatic and financial success, hosting 2,434 paid in-person and 569 paid virtual attendees, representing 106% of the total registration budget. Total attendance, including exhibitors, staff, and suppliers, was 3,874. Nearly 160 exhibitors showcased cutting-edge products and services. ACRL also awarded 98 scholarships for the conference in six categories, worth $80,000.

### *ACRL @ ALA Conferences*

As noted earlier in this report the President's Program at the 2025 ALA Annual Conference, "Demystifying AI: Navigating the Laws and Policies Shaping Our Digital Future," featured Brandie Nonnecke, senior director of policy for Americans for Responsible Innovation and founding director of the CITRIS Policy Lab. Attendees gained insights into key regulations, ethical considerations, and best practices that libraries can adopt to navigate AI responsibly.

ACRL and the Elsevier Foundation also launched the pilot of a new community of practice, "Bridging the Gap: An AI Community of Practice," with a workshop at the 2025 ALA Annual Conference. This program will build a community of practice through a "train-the-trainer" model, enabling participants to extend AI knowledge and skills within their institutions and communities.

ACRL sponsored an additional 22 section, committee, and individual programs at the conference on topics such as creating inclusive library spaces, public history, teaching academic integrity though pop culture, feminist citation processes, reflective teaching, academic freedom, fostering student success, and more.

# Year in Review

*"I value the professional development opportunities that ACRL provides, as well as the opportunities to meet and learn from other academic librarians at all stages of their careers. ACRL is also a wonderful source of information on numerous topics. I never run out of things to learn!"*

– Anna Simonson, ACRL Member of the Week



*RBMS Conference*

The RBMS 2025 Conference, "A Multitude of Stories," was held June 24–27, 2025, in New Haven, Connecticut, and virtually. The conference critically examined colonialism's impact on libraries and cultural heritage institutions while exploring practices that make collections more inclusive and representative of often marginalized voices. Attendees learned about returning cultural artifacts, manuscripts, and other items to their countries or communities of origin, particularly if those items were acquired through colonial exploitation or coercion. Additional topics of sessions and conversations included reparative cataloging, reconciliation, and re-evaluating collections. More than 600 in-person and virtual registrants, along with nearly 50 bookseller companies, participated in the conference.

*RoadShows*

The ACRL RoadShow program brings high quality workshops directly to campuses covering a wide range of topics that help academic librarians tackle the greatest issues facing the profession today. Following a hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ACRL's traveling RoadShow workshops have resumed. The program offers both in-person and virtual experiences designed and led by expert academic librarians and researchers. RoadShow topics include "Assessment in Action," "Engaging with the ACRL Framework," "OER and Affordability," "Research Data Management," "Scholarly Communication," and "Standards for Libraries in Higher Education." A special 10% discount on RoadShow licenses was created for ACRL Chapters this year.

*Online Learning*

The ACRL Online Learning program offered 10 total events consisting of 1 webcast, 2 multi-part webcast series, and 3 multi-week courses this year on a variety of topics including AI and critical information literacy, training library instructors, inclusive

hiring, building an information literacy micro-course, and more. More than 480 attendees participated in our Online Learning events this year.

*ACRL Presents … Webcasts*

The ACRL Presents… program offers free occasional webcasts on issues of broad interest and importance to the academic and research library community. ACRL Presents… webcasts offered this year included "Advocacy and Assessment: Using Project Outcome for Academic Libraries," "Getting Hired: A Practical Guide to the Academic Librarian Job Search with ACRL Presidents," and "The State of U.S. Academic Libraries: Findings from the ACRL 2023 Annual Survey."

*ACRL-Choice Webinars*

The ACRL-Choice webinar program provides a venue for publishers, library vendors, and education technology companies to speak directly to the Choice audience. In FY25, Choice hosted 41 programs (up from 34 programs in FY24) and had an average registration of 1,186 (up from 1,061 in FY24). Programming on generative AI was of most interest to the audience. The top three webinars this year were ProQuest's "AI for libraries: Advancing research and discovery," with 2,614 registrants; Elsevier's "GenAI: Navigating changes to the scholarly literature research process," with 2,563 registrants; and Clarivate's "The impact of AI in the classroom: Experiences and learnings" with 1,932 registrants.

*Scholarships*

Knowing that professional development is essential to the success of academic and research librarians, ACRL awarded 98 scholarships for the ACRL 2025 conference in six categories, worth $80,000. The Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) additionally awarded 23 scholarships for the RBMS 2025 Conference worth more than $20,000.

## *ACRL Speaks Out*

Continuing the association's focus on advocacy, ACRL aims to increase its communication on major trends and issues in libraries and increase its influence in public policy affecting higher education.

*Legislative Advocacy*

Public policy issues affecting higher education remain an essential focus of ACRL. We acted on this focus in a number of ways this year.

# Year in Review

Each year, the ACRL Government Relations Committee, in consultation with the ACRL Board of Directors and staff, formulates an ACRL Legislative Agenda. Drafted with input from key ACRL committees, ACRL leaders, and the ALA Public Policy and Advocacy Office, the ACRL Legislative Agenda is prioritized and focuses on issues at the national level affecting the welfare of academic and research libraries. The 2025–26 ACRL Legislative Agenda focuses on five issues that will be the focus of ACRL's advocacy efforts, listed in priority order, Upholding Intellectual Freedom, Federal Funding for Libraries, Net Neutrality, Safety and Security of Artificial Intelligence, and the Affordable College Textbook Act.

The agenda also includes a watch list of policy issues of great concern to academic librarians. The 2025–26 watchlist includes Proposed Elimination of the IPEDS Academic Libraries Survey, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA)/ Immigration Issues, Consumer Data Privacy, Accessible Instructional Materials, and Federal Funding for Higher Education and Federally Funded Research.

In August 2025, the ACRL Board of Directors issued a statement affirming its strong support for the ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) database, a vital resource sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education. ACRL also joined a group of leaders across libraries, scholarly publishing, and higher education to issue a joint op-ed speaking with one voice to affirm the principles that sustain research in the U.S.: trust, continuity, broad access, and scholarly independence this July.

In May 2025, ACRL joined a number of organizations in affirming an American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and The Phi Beta Kappa Society statement that they "remain steadfast and nonpartisan voices championing education in the liberal arts and sciences as essential public good." The organizations "urge the administration to rescind the Executive Order calling for the dismantling of the Department of Education."

This March, ACRL released a statement strongly supporting ALA's statement regarding the elimination of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The statement expressed ACRL's deploring of the executive order issued by the Trump administration on March 14, 2025, and acknowledged the negative impact this would have on academic and research institutions.

Also in March, ACRL joined with 17 other groups to support the Affordable College Textbook Act, introduced by U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Senators Angus King (I-ME), Tina Smith (D-MN), and Ron Wyden (D-OR). The legislation is designed to help students manage costs by making high quality textbooks easily accessible to students, professors, and the public for free.

*Partnerships with Higher Education*

ACRL continues to work with higher education associations to strengthen both partnerships and the profession. The association maintains liaison relationships with a number of higher education associations through the Liaisons Assembly. ACRL currently has liaison relationships with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), American Sociological Association (ASA), Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), Modern Language Association (MLA), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience (NRC-FYEST), National Women's Studies Association (NWSA), and more.

## *Organizational Effectiveness and Vitality*

ACRL sustains the fiscal resources, staff expertise, and organizational structure necessary to advance the association's Plan for Excellence.

***ACRL Staff***

As noted earlier in this report, Teresa Anderson joined the ACRL staff as executive director in May 2025. Allison Payne, who served as interim executive director beginning in 2023, was also promoted to associate director, operations and strategic initiatives, in May.

In December 2024, David Connolly was promoted to recruitment advertising sales manager and grant specialist.

Many of you have had phone and email contact with ACRL's staff in Chicago and at the Choice office in Middletown, Connecticut. Take a minute to "meet" ACRL's diverse staff on the association website at www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/staff/contactacrl.

# ACRL Board of Directors, 2024–2025



ACRL Board of Directors 2024–25 (l to r): (back) Joe Mocnik, Kara M. Whatley, Rebecca Miller Waltz, Walter Butler, Tarida Anantachai, Yasmeen L. Shorish; (front) Beth McNeil, Leo Lo, Brad Warren, Allison Payne. Not pictured: Amy Dye-Reeves, Carrie Forbes, Mary Mallery, Rachel M. Minkin.

## ACRL Board of Directors, 2024–2025

**President**
Leo Lo
*University of New Mexico*

**Vice-President/President-Elect**
Brad Warren
*Augusta University*

**Past-President**
Beth McNeil
*Purdue University*

**Budget & Finance Committee Chair**
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Kara M. Whatley
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**Executive Director**
*(Ex-officio)*
Teresa Anderson
*ACRL/ALA*

**Directors-at-large**

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Rachel Minkin
*Michigan State University*

Yasmeen Shorish
*James Madison University*

Rebecca Miller Waltz
*Pennsylvania State University*

# Financial Report

## *Joe Mocnik*
### *Budget & Finance Committee Chair*



Due to the timing of the ALA/ACRL financial closes, our usual budget report for FY25 was not available at press time. ACRL's full FY25 financial report will be added to the ACRL website when data is available, with a notice posted in a future issue of *C&RL News* and on additional ACRL communications channels. Thank you for your patience.

**Budget & Finance Committee, 2024–2025**

Joe Mocnik, *Kansas State University, chair*
Tracy Bicknell-Holmes, *Boise State University*
Jessica J. Boyer, *Mount St. Mary's University*
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Robert H. McDonald, *University of Colorado Boulder*
Valerie Ila Minson, *University of Florida*
Marilyn N. Ochoa
Katy O'Neill, *Loyola Notre Dame*
Matthew Shaw, *Ball State University*
Stefanie Elizabeth Warlick
Brad Warren, *Augusta University, ex-officio*
Teresa Anderson, *ACRL/ALA, ex-officio*

**British History Online.** *Access:* https://www.british-history.ac.uk/

Created in 2002 as a pilot project, British History Online (BHO) is a repository of British historical and primary documents created by the Institute of Historical Research. Although about 80 percent of BHO's content is freely available, access to the remaining subscription-based materials was not possible during this review because of technical issues with the site's payment gateway. BHO provides academic librarians with a robust collection of primary and secondary sources, in addition to advanced search tools and instructional guides that can support faculty research, student learning, and collection development in British and European history.

Locating and browsing content on the site is relatively simple. BHO hosts access to primary sources, secondary texts, guides and calendars, high-resolution maps, datasets, and an option to search the full catalog. These categories appear as helpful facets on the homepage that grant immediate access to the resources.

According to the Institute of Historical Research, there are more than 1,300 primary and secondary volumes and 10,000 map tiles dating back to 500 A.D. through 1999. Users can search and browse through the Calendar of State Papers. Most of the content is transcribed and displayed in HTML directly on the site, and much of the premium material consists of high-resolution scans. Many documents also feature hyperlinked footnotes.

Users will benefit from an in-depth knowledge of British historical documents and key figures from different periods, though a subject guide is available to support those less familiar with the material. This guide provides background information on content like the Calendar of State Papers, Calendar of Papal Registers for Britain and Ireland, and other sources that novice historians can use to familiarize themselves with primary historical resources.

The resource is particularly valuable for institutions supporting undergraduate and graduate history programs because it consolidates a wide range of authoritative sources that would otherwise require navigating multiple archival platforms. Faculty can integrate BHO materials into course assignments, and librarians can recommend them as reliable supplements to print and microform collections. — *Christopher M. Hulsman, SUNY Buffalo State University, hulsmacm@buffalostate.edu*.

**International Monetary Fund.** *Access:* https://www.imf.org/en/Home

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was established by forty-four founding member countries in 1944 in the aftermath of the Great Depression. Today the IMF has grown to 191 countries and "works to achieve sustainable growth and prosperity for all of its members." The organization is accountable to and governed by its membership.

Individuals affiliated with the organization maintain the IMF website. The site is divided into eight major sections accessible through persistent links at the top of each page: About, Research, Countries, Capacity Development, News, Videos, Data, and Publications. Each section has its own extensive drop-down menu. Content spotlights on the homepage duplicate content available elsewhere on the site. Unique features of the homepage include a

Dawn Behrend is associate dean of administrative services at the University of North Florida Thomas G. Carpenter Library, email: dawn.behrend@unf.edu.

"Resources For" section that links to guides targeting specific audiences such as civil society, youth, journalists, and legislators.

The extensive economic data available from the IMF is the standout feature of the website. Although the IMF DataMapper is available on the homepage, accessing "Data" from the top of any page will take users to the robust IMF data page, where the IMF Data Portal can be accessed. Users can enter keyword searches or explore the data explorer tool, datasets, or review the data release calendar browsable by topic or data set filter. Users should be aware that not all datasets are publicly available. Restricted datasets require creating an account. The "Countries" section links to "IMF Country Information" with an A–Z list for accessing country economic data.

IMF's flagship publications can be accessed from various pages throughout the site, most prominently from both the Research and Publications sections. The latter section has the added advantage of a keyword search box and an advanced search option. Users may find the layout of the publications section easier to navigate with colorful links to popular research titles in addition to a "Papers and Notes" section. Academic librarians will appreciate the "Essential Reading Guides from Our E-Library." The "Our Resources" section includes links to the IMF eLibrary, IMF Bookstore, and Publications Catalog.

The substantial IMF website has content added regularly, with daily updates for some sections. Additionally, the "News" section allows for page translation into six different languages. Users will want to take their time to explore the vast resources and content available from the IMF. — *Christa Bailey, San Jose State University, christa.bailey@sjsu.edu*.

**National Academy of Sciences.** *Access:* http://www.nasonline.org

The National Academy of Science (NAS) was created in 1863 when President Abraham Lincoln signed the Act to Incorporate the National Academy of Sciences. This independent advisory body provides scientific and technical guidance, upon request, to any branch of government without compensation. Membership is conferred through election, with nominations submitted by current NAS members. Members represent the following classes: Physical and Mathematical Sciences, Biological Sciences, Engineering and Applied Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Behavioral and Social Sciences, and Applied Biological, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. Other organizations operating under the NAS charter include the National Academy of Engineering, National Academy of Medicine, and the National Research Council. Academic librarians will find this resource valuable because it provides authoritative publications, reports, and programs from NAS that can support faculty research, inform science policy studies, and enrich instruction in STEM and social science disciplines.

The "Programs" section includes a number of resources on programs and initiatives of NAS. "Scientific Meetings" features *Frontiers of Science* designed to expose early career researchers to cutting-edge topics and a network of potential colleagues and *International Forums* to encourage collaboration among researchers on a global scale. *Cultural Programs, Distinctive Voices, LABX, The Science & Entertainment Exchange* are all programs designed to engage the public in science discussions. "Science & Society" consists of committees dedicated to issues of importance to the science community.

The "Awards" section highlights all awards offered in the upcoming year, with links to their history, eligibility requirements, past recipients, and online nomination forms. The "News" section features stories and updates related to the academy. "Support Our Work" provides ways to donate and contribute to NAS.

Navigating to "Publications" gives the user access to NAS publications and reports from the National Academies. NAS publishes two peer-reviewed journals: *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, which becomes open access after a six-month embargo, and *PNAS Nexus*, a gold open-access journal. Also located under Publications is "Issues in Science and Technology," which includes articles and podcasts, and "Biographical Memoirs," which provides full text of nearly 1,900 memoirs of deceased members. Finally, "National Academies Press" allows full-text access to books and publications to read online or download as a PDF at no cost, as well as options to purchase a paperback or ebook. — *Meredith Ayers, Northern Illinois University, mayers@niu.edu*.

The Private Academic Library Network of Indiana (PALNI) has received a $1.34 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to launch the next phase of its transformative PALSave: PALNI Affordable Learning Program. The four-year initiative, titled "Strengthening the PALSave Affordable Learning Program for Greater Impact," will build on the program's proven success in reducing textbook costs; expanding access to learning materials; and empowering faculty across Indiana's private higher education sector to adopt, adapt, and create open educational resources.

The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill University Libraries' On the Books initiative is expanding its scope and exploring how artificial intelligence can make it easier to find and use materials from the archives. A $765,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation will support three case studies using artificial intelligence (AI) to improve access to materials related to groups historically underrepresented in institutional collections. Previous grants from the Foundation allowed the University Libraries to investigate text mining and machine learning to identify discriminatory language in historical statutes.

## Acquisitions

The University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Library has acquired the papers of Sandy Gooch, an entrepreneur whose vision transformed the way many Americans prepare, eat, and shop for food and health care products. As founder of Mrs. Gooch's Natural Food Markets—the first natural foods supermarket chain in the United States—she adhered to strict requirements for freshness and quality, leading food-industry vendors to coin the term *Goochable*. After being hospitalized in the mid-1970s for a life-threatening allergic reaction to an antibiotic, Gooch discovered that chemical additives in sodas and foods exacerbated her condition. Motivated by this knowledge, Gooch left her job to open her first market in 1977 in an old A&P grocery store space in West Los Angeles.



By 1993, Mrs. Gooch's, which offered a range of quality, nutritious foods while advocating for healthy lifestyles, had expanded to seven stores and was one of the highest-grossing natural products markets in the world with annual sales of more than $90 million. In September 1993, Gooch sold her company to Whole Foods Market for $60 million, merging the nation's two biggest natural foods supermarket chains. The Sandy Gooch Papers, to be housed in UCLA Library Special Collections, document the founding and growth of Mrs. Gooch's Natural Food Markets, as well as the founder's life's work. The gift from Gooch and her husband, Harry Lederman, includes business records, product information, advertising, decor materials, photographs, and videos that record the importance of the natural foods chain.

The Library of Congress has acquired rare music and lyric sketches from composer Harold Arlen and lyricist E. Y. "Yip" Harburg, best known for their collaboration on the score of the iconic film *The Wizard of Oz* in 1939. The film opened in theaters eighty-six years ago on August 25, 1939, and was inducted into the Library of Congress National Film Registry in 1989. The new acquisition includes thirty-five manuscript items from Arlen and Harburg's creative work, including the first handwritten drafts of music and lyrics from some of the most beloved songs from *The Wizard of Oz*. The collection also includes draft song lists and correspondence from the director of the film, Mervyn Leroy. The star of the collection: the only lyric sketch for "Over the Rainbow" known to exist. "Some day I'll wish upon a star + wake + find the darkness far behind me," Harburg scrawled in pencil on a scrap of yellow legal paper.

The Library of Congress also recently acquired a historical collection of amateur photographic prints from the Photographic Section of the Academy of Science and Art of Pittsburgh, one of the nation's oldest continuously operating photography clubs. The collection includes approximately 700 prints that were exhibited in the organization's salons held annually from 1914 through 1980, along with a full run of salon catalogs. Although many works are by Pittsburgh-based photographers, the collection includes nationally and internationally recognized figures such as Hiromu Kira, Harry K. Shigeta, William Mortensen, A. Aubrey Bodine, José Ortiz Echagüe, Rudolf Koppitz, and Leonard Missone. Of note are 181 prints by Charles K. Archer, former section president from 1927 to 1939, most created using the labor-intensive bromoil process, an expressive photo technique that allows artists to manipulate the pigment application and emphasize the aesthetic and emotional qualities of a print.