

Introduction to Volume 13, Issue 1

Since its inception, *Practical Academic Librarianship's* mission has been to showcase the creative, innovative, and valuable work happening in academic libraries across the world. Librarians working in higher education settings consistently support faculty, students, researchers, and the community through careful and thoughtful development of resources and services to support them in their learning, research and creative endeavors. This endeavor has never been without challenges - budget shortfalls, ever-changing institutional priorities, lack of diversity and inclusion, poor management - all are hurdles that academic librarians must navigate.

For example, the American Library Association recently reported that demands to censor library books and resources doubled in 2022, up from 729 challenges in 2021 to 1,269¹. Most of the challenges targeted school and classroom libraries, with public libraries falling not far behind. On the academic library front, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* ran an article in March titled, "The Librarians Are Not Okay," detailing the decline of faculty status among academic librarians and the difficulties many experience collaborating with subject faculty². But despite the challenges, librarians and information professionals continue to advocate for the value of libraries and information resources for the communities they serve; the articles in the current issue of PAL are terrific examples of this ongoing effort.

Research support from librarians is a primary service offered by academic libraries and is the topic of "Exploring Research Support by Academic Librarians to Faculty Members." In this article, librarians at the University of Ghana delve into the perceived value of various research services and systems. This study highlights the key role librarians play in finding and evaluating information, as well as providing guidance on how to use specialized research tools and databases, as well as help with citation management and other aspects of the research process.

The article "Putting the Puzzle Together: Creating a Library Orientation Escape Room for First-Year University Students" describes how librarians and staff at James Madison University expanded on their existing information literacy session to first-year students through development of this innovative and fun idea.

Finally, a case study on institutional repositories, a place for universities to store and share their research output, explores their development and current status in one U.S. state. "A Study of the Deployment of Institutional Repositories in Colleges and Universities in Connecticut" is an interesting introduction and discussion of how these repositories not only helps ensure the preservation of important research, but also makes it more accessible to a wider audience, including scholars and researchers outside of the institution.

Looking toward the future, we are excited to report that we will be publishing a second issue in

Fall 2023 and are looking forward to seeing your submissions. We are interested in not only research articles, but also book reviews and “think pieces” (essay-length treatments of a topic of interest). While these latter two types of submissions are not peer-reviewed, they provide a low-commitment opportunity to explore topics for later research and spark discussion. We especially encourage new library and information science professionals to submit their work, and would love to chat with you about your ideas. Thanks for your support of *PAL*!

Ms. Jennifer Bartlett and Dr. Stacey Greenwell
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Endnotes

1 American Library Association. (2023, March 23). American Library Association reports record number of demands to censor library books and materials in 2022. ALA News. Retrieved March 30, 2023, from <https://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2023/03/record-book-bans-2022>.

2 Doležal, J. (2023, March 23). The librarians are not ok. The Chronicle of Higher Education. Retrieved March 30, 2023, from https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-librarians-are-not-ok?utm_source=Iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=campaign_6483063_nl_Academe-Today_date_20230328&cid=at&source=ams&sourceid=.