

ACRL wraps up Year 1 of Academic Library Statistics Project

How you can get the results

by Hugh Thompson

ACRL has just completed the first year of its comprehensive statistics-gathering project, serving academic libraries at all levels throughout the United States and Canada. Although the response rate was well below 100%, the Academic Libraries Trends and Statistics was judged highly successful for a new project, with just over 34% of the 3,000 institutions responding to letters their inviting participation.

Why is ACRL doing this survey?

With a number of other library surveys being carried out, why did ACRL feel that another survey was necessary? William Miller, director of libraries at Florida Atlantic University and chair of the advisory committee for the project, said, "Many academic librarians have long felt the need for more current and comprehensive data about other libraries than was easily accessible."

ACRL was attempting to address several issues with its survey. The first was the timely availability of library statistics. To shorten the compilation time, the data was gathered by use of the Web. This reduced both the time and the mailing expenses required for both ACRL and the respondents. The data was also in electronic form as soon as it was gathered and thus could be compiled and reformatted immediately.

Another issue was to provide data for the full range of institutions. Many have felt underserved by existing surveys, many of which serve limited segments of the academic library universe. There was very good representation in all four Carnegie Classifications and, as the survey becomes better known and valued in succeeding years, ACRL hopes that participation will increase significantly.

Finally, ACRL plans to conduct the survey on an annual basis. This will provide current data with increased relevance to the various research and proposals for which it is being cited.

How can the results be obtained?

ACRL has published the survey results in two formats: CD-ROM and print. The traditional paper version is in two volumes: one listing the Associate of Arts Carnegie Classification and the other listing the Doctoral/Master's/Baccalaureate classifications. Each lists the complete data and various summary tables.

The Associate of Arts volume (ISBN 0-8389-8069-4, 135p.) is \$75 (\$65 for ACRL members) and the Doctoral/Master's/Baccalaureate volume (ISBN 0-8389-8070-8, 315p.) is \$135 (\$115 for ACRL members). They can be ordered from ALA Order Fulfillment, 155 N. Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60606; (800)

About the author

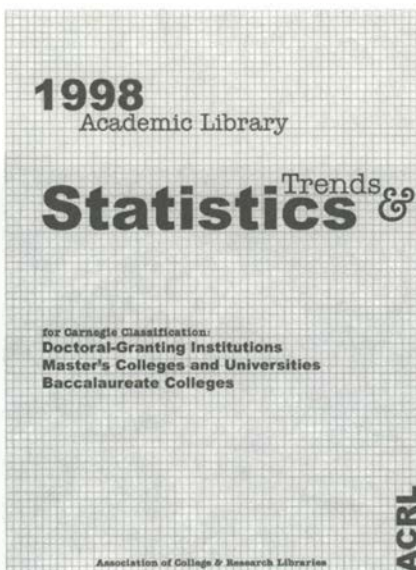
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545-2433, press 7. The CD contains the complete database and an extensive capability for searching across different parameters specified by the user and numerous options for graphical display of selected data. It is commercially available from Management Dynamics, 175 N. Freedom Blvd., Provo, UT 84601; (801) 371-9222.

What is up next?

The data-gathering phase for the new survey is planned for November to December 1999, with publication of results by April 2000. The statistics will cover the fiscal year ending around June 30, 1999.

In addition, a number of trends questions will be added—questions that address cur-



rent developments resulting from new technology or changing conditions in the academic environment. Trends questions in the 1999 survey will include institutional practices with respect to academic or faculty status for librarians and questions that will identify the total number of electronic journals to which libraries offer access as a result of the various subscription services they are purchasing.

“We are hoping for a significant increase in participation,” says Miller. “As the project continues and becomes more widely

known and valued in future years, additional institutions will wish to be included, which in turn will enhance the comprehensiveness and value of the data.” ■



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