

“There are years that ask questions and years that answer.”

I recently rediscovered this quote from Zora Neale Hurston, and it was if it plucked a string inside of me—there was a huge, resounding (and somewhat anxious) feeling of agreement. There is no doubt that 2020 has been a year of questions, and, in some ways, a year of very hard answers. Answers around who we are as a profession, who we are as citizens of nations, as members of different communities, as participants in society. With the political turmoil, environmental disasters, the social conflict around longstanding inequities, the pandemic and the health concerns, and the resulting economic uncertainties, is it any wonder that we are all feeling off balance—that we are overwhelmed with questions and seeking answers?

I do not claim to have all the answers, or really, any of them. Fortunately, I am surrounded by people smarter than I am, people engaged in helping to answer these questions and address these problems in libraries, in higher education, in our association.

One such group of dedicated people is the Editorial Board of *College & Research Libraries*. They give of their time and their expertise, helping steward the journal to be representative of the trends and values in the profession. They have taken a number of questions that, while very specific to scholarship, speak to the values of equity and transparency.

In this November issue, the editorial is coauthored with three of experts in the field who provide vision and commitment, Sarah Fitzgerald, Penny Beile, and John Budd, who took a very thoughtful approach to contributor roles and how they should be represented in the journal. They started with a notable effort from CASRAI (the CReDiT taxonomy) but then

adapted it to align with library science and practice. Their recommendations have been approved by the Board and will be implemented in 2021.

The authors in this November issue have also asked some timely and difficult questions, addressing some topics that we may take for granted in our practice, as well as a considering larger issues and some longstanding concerns.

“Patterns of Differentiation of Students’ Competencies: A Comparative Study” by Ewa Głowacka, Małgorzata Kisilowska, and Magdalena Paul. The study focuses on the issue of how much information competencies are universal in the globalized, Internet-connected world, and/or to what extent their perception depends on local conditions and individual needs. The aim of the project is threefold. First, it offers a comparative analysis of the information literacy skills of Polish and Spanish students, regarding both their self-assessment and belief in the importance of information literacy. Second, it focuses on differences and unique information literacy needs of students of courses rooted in social sciences and/or humanities. And third, due to these differences, it discusses the role of academic librarians in profiled information literacy training, integrated with the specific courses. Quantitative methodology was applied. The comparative study covered subgroups of humanities and social science students from Poland and Spain. Competencies in information searching, processing, evaluation, and communication/dissemination were taken into account. The results indicate some common ways of perception of valuing information competencies and major differences in assessment of information literacy self-efficacy. Students’ reluctance to visit libraries is another argument to enhance profiled information literacy training being realized in close cooperation of academic librarians and the faculty.

“Adoption of the Open Access Business Model in Scientific Journal Publishing: A Cross-

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disciplinary Study” by Bo-Christer Björk and Timo Korkeamäki. Scientific journal publishers have rapidly converted during the past 25 years to predominantly electronic dissemination, but the reader-pays business model continues to dominate the market. Open Access (OA) publishing, where the articles are freely readable on the Internet, has slowly increased its market share to near 20 percent but has failed to fulfill the visions of rapid proliferation predicted by many early proponents. The growth of OA has also been very uneven across fields of science. We report market shares of OA in 18 Scopus-indexed disciplines ranging from 27 percent (agriculture) to 7 percent (business). The differences become far more pronounced for journals published in the four countries that dominate commercial scholarly publishing (United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands). We present contrasting developments within six academic disciplines. Availability of funding to pay publication charges, pressure from research funding agencies, and the diversity of discipline-specific research communication cultures arise as potential explanations for the observed differences.

“Seeking and Finding Research Collaborators: An Exploratory Study of Librarian Motivations, Strategies, and Success Rates” by Ngoc-Yen Tran and Emily K. Chan. Library and information science research is increasingly conducted in collaboration. While this phenomenon has been largely acknowledged in the profession, there is a lack of clarity on the factors that motivate librarians to seek research collaborators. This exploratory study explores librarians’ motivations, strategies, and their perceived or relative success rates for finding collaborations on research projects or library initiatives. Survey results indicate that the most prevalent motivators for seeking a collaborator were to acquire expertise that one lacked, sustain research interest, and obtain a sounding board. Workplace culture, being open to collaborations, and attending conferences and meetings were the top selected strategies for finding research collaborators with the highest relative success rates.

“Effectiveness of Vernacular Library Orientation Videos in Comparison with the English Language Equivalent” by Jennifer Cong Yan Zhao and Tara Mawhinney. Vernacular language videos with narration in non-English languages have been used in North American academic libraries to engage and empower international and non-native English-speaking students. This study investigated the effectiveness of McGill University Library’s orientation videos from the perspective of these students, using mixed methods to outline student learning, affective responses, and views on audiovisual features used in the video. Compared to the English video, vernacular language videos are equally effective in delivering content and more adept at invoking student enthusiasm about the library. These students’ perceptions on video design and audiovisual features are useful for librarians who use videos to engage a linguistically diverse campus.

“Documenting Digital Projects: Instituting Guidelines for Digital Dissertations and Theses in the Humanities” by Roxanne Shirazi and Stephen Zweibel. Dissertations and theses with interactive digital components seldom fit neatly into the institutional format requirements designed for traditional humanities texts. This creates challenges for students, administrators, and librarians who are charged with preparing these works for library deposit. While disciplinary acceptance of digital dissertations in the humanities may be increasing across institutions, little attention is given to the mechanics of documenting and submitting such projects. Readers are also challenged to find and interpret digital projects that may not be entirely described in the accompanying paper. To address this, the authors examined a set of digital theses and dissertations at their institution to determine how these digital components might fit into traditional manuscript formatting guidelines. This article introduces the resulting set of local documentation guidelines for digital dissertations and theses aimed at improving access, preservation, and reproducibility.

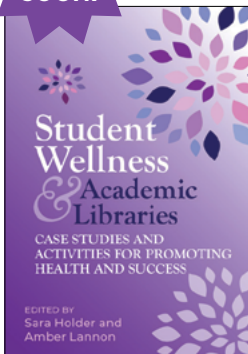
“Leveling Up: Women Academic Librarians’ Career Progression in Management Positions” by Lorelei B. Rutledge. This study explored how women academic librarians in management described their career progression compared to those who are not in management positions. Women librarians working full-time in academic libraries were surveyed about their career experiences to explore what barriers they faced in pursuing or persisting in management positions, as well as their perceptions of the factors necessary for success in such positions. After collecting 224 online surveys, 37 semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of these librarians to provide context for their survey answers. Understanding women academic librarians’ perceptions of their careers, especially with regard to barriers that may discourage them from advancing to management positions, as well as factors that may help them succeed, can provide insight into

how to better support women in management in academic libraries.

“How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Usage Data” by Michael P. Hughes. The digital environment has transformed how data on library material use is collected and reported, providing librarians with more information about usage but less clarity about how to interpret it. This article discusses current approaches to reporting and assessing library book use, addresses the question of what qualifies as a worthwhile use of library materials, and presents an analysis of four years of COUNTER 4 BR2 ebook reports at a single research institution to explore the reliability of page view-level usage data for collection assessment. It reveals ways assessment theory and practice fail to capture the value of library materials throughout the research lifecycle and argues for an inclusive view of collections use. *RL*

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