

Janine A. Kuntz and Jeannette E. Pierce

The 2019 ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Annual Survey

Mapping results to the ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education

The editorial board of the ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey is pleased to announce response rates have improved over the past five years with 51.6% of U.S. libraries responding in 2019 compared to 48.2% in 2015. Thank you to all libraries that contributed fiscal year 2019 data as well as prior years. Increased participation leads to a more comprehensive understanding of what is happening in academic libraries and generates more robust data for benchmarking and impact analysis. Survey participants receive complimentary access to the summary data via the ACRLMetrics platform. Those who wish to dive deeper into the data can subscribe to ACRLMetrics, an online tool providing access to all ACRL survey data from 1998 to present. Additionally, a print edition of the 2019 data is also available for purchase through the ALA Store. This article highlights some of the key findings from the 2019 survey with respect to the principles in the Standards for Libraries in Higher Education to illustrate how the data can be used by institutions to demonstrate impact and influence. ACRLMetrics also offers a rich body of data for researchers investigating trends across the profession.

The ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education provides a framework for looking at library outcomes within the context of higher education priorities. The standards identify performance indicators organized according to nine principles (institutional effectiveness, professional values, educational role, discovery, collections, space, management/administration/leadership, personnel, and external relations), which can be

used collectively or individually to demonstrate impact and document contributions of libraries.¹ We have mapped the 2019 ACRL survey data to six of the nine principles, with the exception of institutional effectiveness, space, and external relations to present a macro view of how academic libraries contribute to the academic mission and success of their institutions.² For the purposes of this article, the data are presented by Carnegie Classification (doctoral, master's, baccalaureate, and associate's institutions), ACRLMetrics subscribers can create custom peer groups for more detailed benchmarking and discovery. While recognizing that the ACRL survey data does not paint a complete picture of how libraries support their institutions, we hope to demonstrate how the survey data can be used effectively to provide evidence of success and to benchmark with peers.

Educational role

Library personnel collaborate with faculty and others regarding ways to incorporate library collections and services into effective curricu-

Janine A. Kuntz is a member of the ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey Editorial Board and instruction and social sciences librarian at Wheaton College MA, email: kuntz_janine@wheatoncollege.edu, and Jeannette E. Pierce is a member of the ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey Editorial Board, associate university librarian for research, access, and instructional services, as well as interim associate university librarian for university archives, special collections, and digital services at the University of Missouri, email: piercejea@missouri.edu

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Average Number of Total Presentations to Groups per Institution			
	2018	2019	% Change
Doctoral	535	481	-10.0%
Master's	228	218	-4.4%
Baccalaureate	111	116	4.5%
Associate's	171	172	0.5%

Table 1. Source: Academic Libraries Trends and Statistics Survey 2018 and 2019

lar and cocurricular experiences for students. (Performance Indicator 3.1)

One way to measure library personnel engagement with faculty is to look at the group presentation data. Comparisons of the 2019 data with responses from the 2018 survey (see Table 1) show that while the average number of presentations to groups decreased for doctoral (-10.0%) and master's (-4.4%) institutions, baccalaureate and associate's institutions saw increases of 4.5% and 0.5%, respectively. Master's institutions reported the highest number of digital presentations (133 on average per institution) followed by associate's (31), doctoral

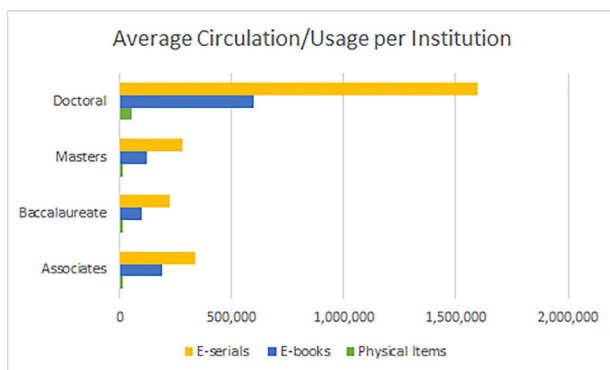


Chart 1. Source: Academic Libraries Trends and Statistics Survey 2019

(28), and baccalaureate (4). Compared to 2018 survey responses, digital presentations on average slightly increased for doctoral institutions (0.2%), but decreased for master's (-10.0%), associate's (-19.9%), and, most significantly,

baccalaureate (-53.8%) schools.

Circulation and usage data can also be used as evidence of collaboration with faculty by helping us understand whether faculty are requiring students to use a variety of library resources. Across all institutions, e-series were the most used library resources (see Chart 1) followed by e-books and physical items, respectively. Comparison of these findings with 2015 survey data shows that across all institutions, physical material circulation is down an average of 32%, whereas both e-book (4%) and e-series (7%) show increased usage.

Discovery

The library provides one-on-one assistance through multiple platforms to help users find information. (Performance Indicator 4.6)

Separated into three groups, reference data highlights the one-on-one work of library staff. In 2019 academic libraries recorded a total of 8.4 million reference transactions, 1.4 million virtual reference transactions, and nearly 700,000 in-person consultations. Over the past five years, the average number of consultations provided by master's and baccalaureate institutions have remained steady (see Chart 2), while associate's institutions have increased and doctoral institutions have decreased.

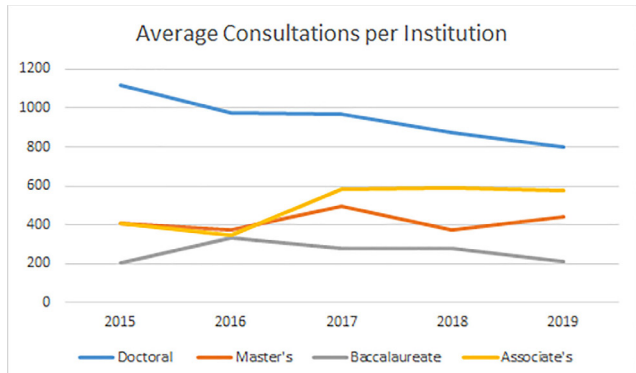
Collections

The library provides collections that incorporate resources in a variety of formats, accessible virtually and physically. (Performance Indicator 5.2)

Library collections continue to be an important part of the library budget and the allocation of funds reflects changing user needs. The

2019 survey responses indicate library expenditures for collection materials averaged \$5.6 million for doctoral institutions, \$724,124 for master's institutions, \$486,972 for baccalaureate institutions, and \$134,364 for associate's institutions.

Libraries continue to allocate a greater portion of their total materials budget to subscription resources with master's institutions spending an average of 82.6% of their materials budgets on ongoing commitments to subscriptions followed by baccalaureate (79.9%), doctoral (79.2%), and associate's institutions (63.6%).³



The library builds and ensures access to unique materials, including digital collections. (Performance Indicator 5.3)

Academic libraries continue to expand open access to collections through their digital repositories. Academic libraries across all classifications reported hosting an astonishing 29.3 million items in local digital repositories in 2019. Doctoral institutions lead the charge hosting 24.9 million items followed by master's (2.9 million), baccalaureate (1.3 million), and associate's institutions (139,340). The hard work of digitization is paying off, academic libraries reported 493 million users of their digital repository items, which is a 40% increase from item usage reported in 2015.

Management/administration/ leadership

The library partners with multiple institutions (e.g., via collections consortia) to increase cost-effectiveness and to expand access to collections. (Performance Indicator 7.5)

In response to survey feedback, ACRL began asking libraries to report dollar amounts for external contributions from consortia in 2018. This new data can help illustrate how academic libraries partner to increase cost effectiveness and expand access to collections. The total amount paid by external bodies for physical resources provided by academic libraries in 2019 was \$23,575,511, while the total amount for electronic resources was an extraordinary \$73,308,985. Altogether external bodies paid a total of \$96,883,996 on behalf of academic libraries, with an average

Chart 2. Source: Academic Libraries Trends and Statistics Survey 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019.

expenditure of \$198,914 per doctoral institution, \$176,934 per master's institution, \$56,364 per baccalaureate institution, and \$78,205 per associate's institution.

Personnel

Library personnel are sufficient in quantity to meet the diverse teaching and research needs of faculty and students. (Performance Indicator 8.1)

Determining whether the number of library personnel is sufficient and meets the needs of users can be difficult. ACRL survey data provides one way academic libraries can do this by looking at

Ratio of Student FTE to Library Staff FTE				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Doctoral	148:1	141:1	147:1	153:1
Master's	187:1	190:1	194:1	211:1
Baccalaureate	125:1	129:1	131:1	137:1
Associate's	385:1	377:1	284:1	394:1

Table 2. Source: Academic Libraries Trends and Statistics Survey 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019.

staffing with respect to enrollment as illustrated below (see Table 2). While enrollment numbers have remained somewhat consistent since 2016, the number of library staff has decreased across all institution types. While there may be additional factors at play, this may suggest the need for more research on how the ratio of students to library staff correlates with the educational engagement of library staff with faculty and students.

Professional values

The library engages in collaborations both on campus and across institutional boundaries. (Performance Indicator 2.6)

Many library collaborations are developed to address a campus need. The 2019 trends survey focused on academic library engagement with Open Educational Resources (OER) on their campuses. Nearly half of the 1,516 U.S. libraries who responded to the survey reported an OER initiative at their institution, with 12 libraries estimating that OER had saved the students at their institutions more than \$1 million the previous fiscal year. Associate's institutions reported the highest percentage of OER initiatives at 62%, followed by doctoral (55%), master's (42%), and baccalaureate institutions (31%). The most common OER-related activities include creating subject guides or other educational materials, searching for quality OER for faculty, advocating for library inclusion in OER activities on campus, and training faculty and staff on OER. Additionally, almost half of the libraries reporting OER initiatives indicated having one staff person dedicated to OER, while the remaining half indicated that they rely on multiple individuals to support this work.

Participation in the survey

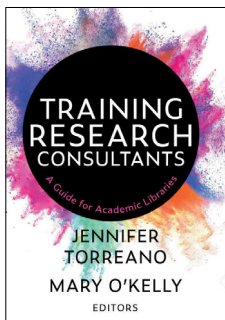
It's not too late for libraries to participate in the 2020 survey. The survey collection period ends

February 28, 2021. Please consider the value of participating for your institution and the profession. All libraries participating in the 2020 survey will be invited to contribute data to a new facilities survey developed in response to participant requests for metrics on square footage, seating, and types of space. The editorial board welcomes comments on the ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey and carefully reviews all feedback as it works to improve survey elements and instructions. The addition of consortia questions in 2018 and the inclusion of asynchronous instruction data in 2020 reflect changes to the survey made in response to participant input. For more information about the survey, go to <https://acrl.libguides.com/stats/surveyhelp>.

Notes

1. ACRL, "Standards for Libraries in Higher Education, August 29, 2006, www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries.
2. For the purposes of this article, all data is derived from the summary data results available through ACRLMetrics. Institutions that complete the survey receive complimentary access to this data.
3. Mary Jane Petrowski, "2019 Academic Library Trends and Statistics," ACRL Insider, October 29, 2020, <https://acrl.ala.org/acrlinsider/archives/20478>. *z*

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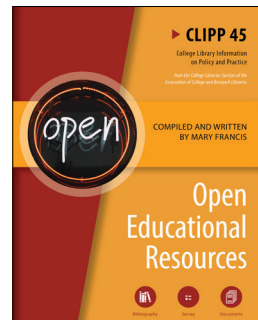


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