

As we come out of a chaotic election season and head into what will be a very interesting presidential transition with far-reaching implications for higher education, intellectual freedom, and access to information, it is with some irony that I keep reading in the press about how “out of touch” academics are with real-world concerns.<sup>1</sup> This latest riff on the “ivory tower” is nothing new: the lack of practical application or engagement in real world problems from academics has long been a complaint of policymakers, the media, industry, and communities, each with their own motivations, perspectives, and priorities.

Institutions of higher education are dealing with some of the same harsh realities that the “real world” does: guns on campuses and other violent situations; sexual assault, harassment, and bullying; freedom of speech versus civility and inclusion; the economics of education and ROI; access to education and intellectual freedom, among many others.

In reality, colleges and universities are microcosms that are, ideally, somewhat more objective in their approach to these issues. It is to be hoped that they are safe places to be able to study and ameliorate those realities, to have the hard conversations in a civil manner in an effort to seek solutions that can be more broadly applied.

As I was pondering (okay, yes, simmering) about the idea that we are “out of touch,” I happened to read one of the articles to be published in the next issue of *College & Research Libraries*. There are a variety of papers reporting original ideas and innovative practices that I am always interested to read but, every now and then, I am surprised by a submission—by how it can stretch the boundaries of scholarly discourse and become a platform for addressing a larger issue with which our society struggles.

The paper, “The ISSAS Model: Understanding the Information Needs of Sexual Assault Survivors on College Campuses,” by Julia Skinner and Melissa Gross is exactly such an article—and I applaud them for their courage in addressing a critical and difficult question that is affecting everyone on college campuses. They present a model for how libraries may effectively and considerately engage with sexual assault survivors on college campuses. This is, admittedly, a difficult topic and one which is often referred to specialists on campus both for the health of the affected individuals and for the protection of the institution involved. As has become clear in numerous news stories over the past few years that have addressed sexual assaults on campuses, these perspectives are often in conflict.

Certainly, while libraries are not often directly involved in these situations and should strive to “do no harm,” Skinner and Gross provide a compelling and professional model for engaging on an issue present on every college campus. Instead of smiling politely, murmuring platitudes and referring the issue to someone else, they have sought a way to be a force for positive change.

Their approach is one that I support wholeheartedly—the willingness to take a risk, in this case both a professional and a personal risk, in an effort to make a positive change that extends beyond the library. Yes, the safe thing to do is to do nothing—no risk, no failure, no notoriety. But in doing nothing, we also change nothing, improve nothing, make no one’s life better—we exist but do not contribute to the world in a way that is meaningful. I am heartened to see those in our profession taking a stand, finding ways to help victimized individuals or marginalized groups, improving campus climates, and contributing to the bigger conversations on our campuses and in higher education. It is clear to me that there will be more opportunities, and more need for us to do so in the future.

We are definitely *not* out of touch.

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The articles in this issue are also focused on trends in higher education and demonstrate how libraries engage with them: scholarly metrics and what they signify, innovative spaces as a way to promote student creativity and learning, strategies for downsizing collections (in an effort to recapture space), academic benefits of library use, and access to textbooks through reserves. Each of these demonstrates how libraries are responsive to larger concerns on their campuses and in their communities.

- Krista M. Soria, Jan Fransen, and Shane Nackerud. “Beyond Books: The Extended Academic Benefits of Library Use for First-Year College Students.” *Abstract*: The purpose of this paper was to investigate whether there are relationships between first-year college students’ use of academic libraries and four academic outcomes: academic engagement, engagement in scholarly activities, academic skills development, and grade point average. The results of regression analyses suggest students’ use of books (collection loans, e-books, and interlibrary loans) and web-based services (database, journal, and library website logins) had the most positive and significant relationships with academic outcomes. Students’ use of reference services was positively associated with their academic engagement and academic skills, while enrollment in library courses was positively associated with grade point averages.

- Julia Skinner and Melissa Gross. “The ISSAS Model: Understanding the Information Needs of Sexual Assault Survivors on College Campuses.” *Abstract*: Sexual assault is a prevalent, yet underreported and stigmatizing crime that disproportionately affects college-age students. The literature of Library & Information Studies does not currently address the ways in which survivors may seek information after an assault. Blending findings from psychology and LIS, this study proposes the Information Seeking of Sexual Assault Survivors (ISSAS) model, which examines the seeking process through various stages of healing. The article concludes with directions for future research as well as insights on serving survivors within

the academic library while being mindful of one’s appropriate professional role.

- Mark Bieraugel and Stern Neill. “Ascending Bloom’s Pyramid: Fostering Student Creativity and Innovation in Academic Library Spaces.” *Abstract*: Our research examined the degree to which behaviors and learning associated with creativity and innovation were supported in five academic library spaces and three other spaces at a mid-sized university. Based on survey data from 226 students, we apply a number of statistical techniques to measure student perceptions of the types of learning and behavior associated with the selected spaces. We found that the on-campus makerspace located outside the library encouraged the most innovative behaviors and exploration of new ideas. Within the library, collaboration rooms were the best spaces for encouraging creativity. There is an opportunity for the academic library to be reconceptualized as a place to foster creativity and innovation in students. We believe that academic libraries should continue to offer a variety of spaces for students, including quiet spaces for reflection, noisy spaces for collaboration and networking, and makerspaces for experimentation.

- Bruce White. “Citations and Circulation Counts—Data Sources for Monograph Deselection in Research Library Collections.” *Abstract*: Studies of data-driven deselection overwhelmingly emphasize the importance of circulation counts and date-of-last-use in the weeding process. When applied to research collections, however, this approach fails to take account of highly influential and significant titles that have not been of interest to large numbers of borrowers but that have been highly cited in the literature. It also assumes that past borrowing activity is a reliable indicator of future usage. This study examines the correlations between past and future usage and between borrowing and citation of monographs, and concludes that both data elements should be used when deselection research monographs.

- Stephanie Pitts-Noggle and Ryan Rafferty. “Investigating Textbook Reserves: A Case Study of Two Models for Reserves Collections.”

*Abstract:* This article examines the behaviors and preferences of medical and nursing students in relation to their required textbooks and library reserves. The findings are based on an April 2015 survey at the University of Illinois-Chicago satellite Library of the Health Sciences in Urbana, where the library provides access to textbooks through traditional “closed” reserves in addition to an “open” reserves collection. Results indicate several barriers to usability regarding traditional reserves services and suggest that students prefer open reserves for convenience and savings. While broad applicability of the model warrants further investigation, academic libraries may be better able to meet patron needs by implementing open textbook reserves.

• John M. Budd. “Faculty Publications and Citations: A Longitudinal Examination.” *Abstract:* This investigation seeks to study the publication and citation activity of faculty at research universities, as defined by membership in the Association of Research Libraries. It constitutes the fourth iteration in a study of publishing behaviors, conducted over more than 20 years. The present data indicate a substantial rise in publications, both in total and as measured on a per capita basis. These data are compared with those of the previous three studies. In addition, and for the first time, citation data are also examined. The reason for the addition of citations is that there is cause to believe that citations are becoming common evaluative criteria for individuals, academic programs, and departments. There are implications for academic libraries with regard to all these data.

• Arthur Taylor and Heather A. Dalal. “Gender and Information Literacy: Evaluation of Gender Differences in a Student Survey of Information Sources.” *Abstract:* Information literacy studies have shown that college students use a variety of information sources to perform research and commonly choose Internet sources over traditional library sources. Studies have also shown that students do not appear to understand the information quality issues concerning Internet information sources and may lack the information literacy skills to make good choices concerning the use of these sources. No studies currently provide clear guidance on how gender might influence the information literacy skills of students. Such guidance could help improve information literacy instruction. This study used a survey of college-aged students to evaluate a subset of student information literacy skills in relation to Internet information sources. Analysis of the data collected provided strong indications of gender differences in information literacy skills. Female respondents appeared to be more discerning than males in evaluating Internet sources. Males appeared to be more confident in the credibility and accuracy of the results returned by search engines. Evaluation of other survey responses strengthened our finding of gender differentiation in information literacy skills.

### Note

1. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/11/09/trump-won-because-college-educated-americans-are-out-of-touch/?utm\\_term=.507003ad8ebb](https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/11/09/trump-won-because-college-educated-americans-are-out-of-touch/?utm_term=.507003ad8ebb) ❧

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(“Sharing the ACRL Framework . . .,” continues from page 14)

conversations within our faculty. We are planning to reach out to several key departments using the Framework as a basis for dialogue. Information literacy has been one of our college’s learning outcomes for many years, and the Framework will provide an opportunity to revitalize the conversations about assessing information literacy in our college.

### Note

1. Jan Meyer and Ray Land, “Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: Linkages to ways of thinking and practicing within the disciplines,” *Enhancing Teaching-Learning Environments in Undergraduate Courses*, [www.etl.tla.ed.ac.uk/docs/ETLreport4.pdf](http://www.etl.tla.ed.ac.uk/docs/ETLreport4.pdf). ❧