VALUE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES STATEMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Academic libraries provide critical direct and indirect value to institutions of higher education in the following areas:

I. SUPPORT RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, & MATRICULATION

o   Academic libraries provide services and facilities that attract students and help increase the likelihood of persistence and graduation.

II. ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING

o   Academic libraries provide opportunities for students to learn marketable skills or to apply what they have learned in their courses in a real-world environment.

o   Several studies show correlations between students' use of academic libraries and positive changes in GPA.

o   Academic libraries support student learning in areas that employers increasingly seek, such as: critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, and integrative- and lifelong-learning.

o   Academic libraries provide an environment that fosters student engagement across all elements of the curriculum and student population.

III. SUPPORT FACULTY RESEARCH & TEACHING

o   Academic librarians assist faculty with the research process and help faculty navigate the shifting landscape of scholarly communication.

o   Academic libraries provide an infrastructure for open data management and open access publishing required by a growing number of granting agencies and foundations.

o   Increased access to faculty research through institutional repositories and university presses enhances institutional standing and positively impacts economic development.

o   Academic librarians support faculty teaching by highlighting new electronic and alternative resources, and provide faculty support in the transition to online course delivery.

IV. RAISE INSTITUTIONAL VISIBILITY & CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY

o   Academic libraries serve as a driver of innovation by facilitating the implications of new technology on pedagogy, course delivery, and research productivity.

o   Academic library facilities foster collaboration, and serve as a unique area on campus that promotes interaction between people of many different cultures, ethnicities, gender identities, and backgrounds.

o   Library services and resources contribute to the welfare of the communities in which institutions of higher education operate.

o   Special collections and archives help preserve the history of the institution or region for future generations.

VALUE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES STATEMENT

While academic libraries have long held a rhetorical position as the "heart of the university," the multiplicity of roles which academic libraries and librarians can fulfill, in part because of advances in technology, transforms this rhetorical phrase into a description of reality. Academic libraries are one of the few units in a modern institution of higher education that can provide an impact on all realms of institutional importance, from student enrollment to faculty productivity to institutional reputation, while balancing services and resources for all constituency groups and stakeholders in higher education.

Academic libraries provide critical direct and indirect value to institutions of higher education in the following areas:

I. SUPPORT RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, & MATRICULATION

Contributions to student enrollment.

Institutions of Higher Education compete for a limited population of traditional college students, with drives for recruiting the best and brightest students.[1] **Academic libraries provide resources, services, and facilities that appeal to the best students and can help attract them to an institution**. The resources and services provided by academic libraries provide access for low-income students, assisting with affordability of higher education. The collections and support provided to graduate, professional, and doctoral students helps attract students into these programs. Non-traditional, transfer, and international students are able to receive assistance from academic libraries, often assisting them with the transition to a different educational environment than what they had previously experienced.

Contributions to student retention & graduation rates.

Numerous studies have demonstrated correlations between use of academic library resources, collections, services, and facilities with student retention.[2] Academic libraries provide services and facilities that **nurture students' academic and social integration** with institutions of higher education, faculty, and fellow students, **helping increase the likelihood of graduation. This has a positive effect on institutional funding in the face of performance-based funding models**.

II. ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING

Supporting student success.

Academic libraries employ student workers in varying levels of employment, serving as a host for internships, graduate assistantships, and service-learning or volunteer experiences. These experiences can provide opportunities for students to **learn marketable skills or to apply what they have learned in their courses in a real-world environment**. Positive experiences with academic libraries can help confirm students' interests in pursuing further study in a field, leading to graduate or professional school placements.[3]

Promoting student achievement.

As with student retention and graduation rates, numerous studies have demonstrated **significant correlations between students' use of academic libraries and positive changes in GPA**.[4] Students with higher GPAs are also likely to do well on professional or educational tests such as the GRE or the CAAP.

Fostering student learning.

In a global, knowledge-based economy, academic libraries play a significant role in contributing to student learning in the area of information literacy. This contribution may take the form of credit-bearing courses, on-request instruction sessions, mentoring undergraduate or graduate research projects or internships, and providing "traditional" one-on-one research assistance in a variety of settings. In addition to information literacy, academic libraries provide services and resources that support student learning in areas of increasing importance for employers, such as **critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, and integrative- and lifelong-learning**.

Improving the student experience.

Academic libraries are unique within institutions of higher education in that they provide an informal academic environment that is **deliberately managed to foster student engagement across all elements of the curriculum and student population**.[5] This ranges from organizing the library facility as a service which promotes collaboration, experience with diversity, and time spent writing and studying to aligning liaison services with learning communities, writing-intensive courses, undergraduate research, and other high-impact educational practices.[6] Academic libraries are ideally situated to provide both academic and social engagement opportunities, which help keep students focused, nurture feelings of integration, and tend to lead to positive learning experiences and graduation.

III.   SUPPORT FACULTY RESEARCH & TEACHING

Contributing to faculty research productivity.

Academic librarians play an evolving role in assisting faculty with the research process, **helping faculty navigate the shifting landscape of scholarly communication**. Academic librarians provide assistance to faculty, administrators, and tenure/promotion committees in evaluating faculty research and creative activities, including open access publications, impact factors, and altmetrics. Librarians help connect faculty who may be working on related research, and provide counseling on authors' rights issues.

Participating in faculty grant proposals and funding.

Academic libraries **provide an infrastructure for open data management and open access publishing** required by an increasing number of granting agencies and foundations. Many academic libraries provide funding for defraying the cost of publishing in an open access format. Successful grant proposals are predicated on the provision of adequate research collections and materials, which academic libraries facilitate.

Improving faculty teaching.

Many academic libraries employ instructional developers, designers, or liaisons to **assist faculty with updating assignments to reflect electronic and alternative resources, and to support faculty in the transition to online course delivery**.

IV. RAISE INSTITUTIONAL VISIBILITY & CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY

Enhancing institutional reputation or prestige.

Special collections and archives serve as a direct means of attracting external attention, through engaging experts seeking to use these resources, along with regional/national/global media consideration for unique holdings.   The distribution of faculty research through institutional repositories and university presses **enhances institutional standing as a generator of new knowledge, which in turn has economic development implications**. Academic libraries are often active participants in institutional fundraising, either directly linking philanthropic activities to library technology, spaces for students, or collections or by indirectly acting as an "upsell" feature for donor proposals in other areas of the university. Academic libraries are also able to be the recipient of national or international awards, generating further prestige for the institution.

Acting as drivers of innovation and technology.

Rapid changes in technology have large-scale implications for academic libraries; as a result, many academic libraries serve as an early experimenter with new technology. This allows academic librarians the opportunity to help drive innovation at institutions of higher education by **facilitating the implications of new technology on pedagogy, course delivery, and research productivity**.

Promoting diversity and global awareness.

Academic library facilities are deliberately designed to foster collaboration, and **serve as a unique area on campus that promotes interaction between people of many different cultures, ethnicities, gender identities, and backgrounds**.

By being of value to the community.

Institutions of higher education actively **contribute to the welfare of their surrounding communities**. Academic libraries can play a key role in this, by providing means for cultural engagement through the promotion of literacy, digital literacy, history, and broadband infrastructure. Many academic libraries provide borrowing privileges for community members, supporting lifelong learning within their communities, and can develop innovative partnerships with such entities as Chambers of Commerce, hospitals, and small business development units.

Preserving institutional and regional history.

Academic libraries serve as a repository for archives of the institution as well as the region, **preserving the history of the institution or region for future generations**.

About

This statement was authored by Adam Murray (James Madison University) and Lorelei Tanji (University of California, Irvine), members of the ACRL Value of Academic Libraries Committee. It was influenced in its basic concept by the United Kingdom's Society of College, National and University Libraries [statement on the value of academic libraries](#) and was modeled on the areas of research outlined in ACRL's 2010 publication [Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report](#). The ACRL Value of Academic Libraries committee proposed the statement and it was approved by the ACRL Board of Directors on June 25, 2016.

Endnotes

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