



New Beginnings: the Inaugural Issue

FROM THE EDITORS

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It is Tuesday, April 2 2019. On this day, like many days, the three of us sat down to answer and craft emails. But on this day, we wrote to each other, responding to a simple question that we began to ponder: “What if we created a peer review journal of academic librarian engagement?”

According to the English language proverb, “necessity is the mother of invention.” Like many librarians, we commit ourselves to serving members of our community, and library outreach and engagement continues to represent an increasingly significant part of the work that librarians and libraries do on a daily basis. However, as a result of our research and own anecdotal experience, we discovered that librarians often lack a more public, scholarly venue to discuss the multifaceted nature of these efforts. And thus, we came up with the idea for the *Journal of Library Outreach and Engagement* (JLOE).

Of course, coming up with an idea is the easy part. Bringing that idea to fruition is another matter altogether. It turns out that starting a journal is hard work. We realized that we needed advice and we needed funding. We are grateful to the many generous colleagues and journal editors that spoke with us to give us their best advice for founding and maintaining a peer-reviewed, open-access journal. We thank our University of Illinois colleagues Lisa Hinchliffe, Merinda Hensley, Dan Tracy, Sara Benson, Steve Witt, and Billy Tringali (now at Emory University) for their thoughtful help. We would also like to thank Matthew Reidsma and Kyle Felker from *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience*, and Ian Beilin and Ryan Randall from *In the Library With a Lead Pipe* for sharing their experiences and advice with us. We are especially grateful towards our editorial advisory board, which has provided essential guidance. Finally, we would like to give thanks to the University of Illinois Library, which provided us with the initial seed funding to design and produce the journal’s first issues.

Eighteen months and hundreds of emails later we are so proud to publish our inaugural issue. In reflecting on our journey over these many months, we learned important lessons and raised questions that will impact the future of this journal, such as matters relating to the diversity style guide, divisions of labor, public library representation, pandemic disruptions, and the need for mentorship.

The submissions we received represent an excellent cross section of outreach and engagement scholarship and discussion. We hope that the journal inspires librarians from across the globe to share their work, to develop research methodologies that represent the unique nature of library outreach and engagement activities, and to create new knowledge that underscores how library outreach and engagement enhances societal good and challenges oppressive conditions. To foster discussion further, we plan to host a panel discussion event where JLOE authors will share their research and answer questions from the audience. And in the months to come, we look forward to implementing a mentorship program, which will assist early career librarians as they prepare their research for publication.

We are so proud of all the work that has gone into this issue, and hope you find inspiration from the shared knowledge within its pages.

Warmly,
Mara Thacker
Matthew Roberts
Sarah Christensen