

Resilience through Action: Academic Library Response to COVID-19, the Leadership Perspective

Dr. Stan Trembach^a, Dr. Liya Deng^b

^aEmporia State University, USA, ^bEastern Washington University, USA

^astrembac@emporia.edu, ^bldeng@ewu.edu

ABSTRACT

COVID-19 has dramatically changed the day-to-day operations for academic libraries, causing major interruptions to traditional library workflows. This poster delineates the outcomes of a mixed-method study that explores how medium-sized academic libraries across the United States have responded to the challenges of the pandemic and managed to sustain the accessibility of their resources in a significantly altered educational environment. In particular, the poster details the results of Phase II of the project, an online survey of library leadership administered in winter 2021 at forty-nine participating libraries. The libraries were selected from the U.S. News and World Report rankings of best regional academic institutions with enrollment of over 10,000 students. Built on the data obtained from Phase I, library website content analysis completed in fall 2020, the survey addressed adjustments in library operations since the onset of COVID-19, including collections, access services, and research support. Results demonstrate that academic libraries cope with these challenges better when they rely on personnel ready to act with resilience in the face of emerging threats and meet the evolving needs of both in-person and online library visitors. The findings unveil issues of employee well-being, robust technology infrastructure for digital access and learning, and adopting a nimble approach to resetting priorities, repurposing resources, and rewarding the ingenuity of staff and users. Therefore, the broader implication of the project is that it highlights a pressing need to conceptually re-imagine the current LIS curriculum to make it more responsive to the complexities of today's teaching and information landscape.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Administration; academic libraries; online learning; community engagement.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Library services; library leadership and management; LIS education; COVID-19.