


The Value of Research in Academic Libraries

Gay Helen Perkins and Amy J.W. Slowik

In the summer of 2010, two researchers interviewed twenty-three library administrators of comparable academic libraries at American universities for their views of the value of research in academic libraries. The interview questions focused on the administrators' perceived value of academic librarians' research, incentives given to academic librarians to research, factors that influence the administrators' thinking about academic library research, opinions about the changes in American libraries in the past decades, and directions that they see the academic library heading. This paper reflects the answers of these (anonymous) administrators and attempts to analyze patterns in their responses that will be of value to the academic library and its community in America.

his study is an exploratory analysis of 23 academic library administrators' perceived value of research in their university/college libraries. With research questions adapted from those previously used for leaders in public libraries (Connie Van Fleet and Joan C. Durrance, 1993,¹ 1994²), the administrators were randomly sampled from those 2,601 university/college libraries that had at least 500,000 total volumes. The libraries' universities were also defined by public/private university, presence/absence of accredited master's program, library affiliation with ARL, and highest degree given by the university. These administrators were given a 20- to 30-minute telephone survey on perceived value of their librarians' research to the librarians, the library, the university, and the profession.

The interviews sought to determine academic library administrators' perceived

value of their librarians' research, perceived changes in academic libraries, and future issues that might influence university/college libraries. This paper presents findings on the effect that informal discussions, professional journals, professional meetings, and new social modules (such as blogs, Twitter, and Facebook) have on these administrators' thinking about academic library research. Finally, the paper covers how much academic library administrators value librarians' research for their librarians, their library, their university, and the library profession. Since the sample of academic library administrators is small, the questions are not addressed for specific independent variables.

The early history of research in academic libraries suggested a limited value for library practitioners, a conclusion that Wallace³ at the University of Oklahoma articulated in 2007. Since the 1850s, librarianship has been a professional practice

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with research efforts, professional groups, conferences, practice-oriented publications, and best practices. However, two events in the early 1900s suggested a new era of research for librarians. In 1921, scientific methodology for library and information science research emerged from the Graduate Library School at the University of Chicago. The first American Library Association division, the ACRL or the Association of College and Reference Libraries, started in 1940.⁴ This division merged with the Library Reference Service Division, and in 1956 ACRL became the Association of College and Research Libraries. A year later, the ACRL Committee on Standards wrote the "Standards for College Libraries." These ACRL standards later included the following documents:

- Guidelines for Academic Status for College and University Librarians (1971, 1972, 1977, 2004)⁵
- Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians (1972, 2001, 2007)⁶
- Statement on the Terminal Professional Degree for Academic Librarians (1975, 2001, 2007)⁷
- Statement on the Certification & Licensing of Academic Librarians (1989, 2001, 2007)⁸
- ACRL Statement on Professional Development (2000)⁹
- A Guideline for the Appointment, Promotion and Tenure of Academic Librarians (2005)¹⁰
- Standards for Faculty Status for College and University Librarians (2007)¹¹

It was the start of setting research standards that would add value to academic librarians' research worldwide.

As early as 1972, the "Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians" emphasized librarians' research roles in both professional interests and work responsibilities.¹² In 2000, the "Statement on Professional Development" pointed out that, as the professional organization for librarians, its academic librarians needed to share

what they had learned through writing, speaking, mentoring, and modeling.¹³ In 2005, "A Guideline for the Appointment, Promotion and Tenure of Academic Librarians" confirmed the importance of inquiry and research activities such as scholarly publication, presentation of papers, and reviews of books.¹⁴ Most recently, the 2007 "Standards for Faculty Status for College and University Librarians" set the line for determining research quality of academic librarians so that their world could be more easily translatable to the academic community as a whole.¹⁵ By the end of the twentieth century, most library and information science faculty members held research degrees. Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, digital access to online databases, the World Wide Web, and publicly available information resources all have the potential to increase the scope and value of library and information science research.

In 1986, Montanelli and Stenstrom¹⁶ at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign defined the value of librarians' research for those librarians and their libraries. This value included job promotion, personal acknowledgment, enriched relationships with teaching faculty, increased ability to change, and better library service through shared knowledge and experience. Other authors have also cited the value of research procedures for library practice in academic libraries. In 2000, Watson-Boone¹⁷ at the Center for the Study of Information Professionals reviewed 24 *Journal of Academic Librarianship* articles and defined three groups of practitioner-researchers. Practitioner-researchers included people with continuing education whose personal interests evolved into practical solutions, those whose management projects merged into policy decisions, and those whose curiosity sparked research.

In 2001, DuBose and Durant¹⁸ at East Carolina University studied free and scholarly e-journals and noted the advantages and disadvantages of research for academic librarians. Advantages included

delineation of research subjects, collaboration with others, improved understanding and application to daily issues, and their own changing development as librarians. Disadvantages were researcher's large commitment of time and effort, time taken from helping patrons and other library duties, and the ongoing lack of tenure-track positions. Then in 2008, Fennewald¹⁹ emphasized the research productivity of the academic librarians at Pennsylvania State. Although individual motivation, intellectual curiosity, and education were advantages, the expectation of doing research at Pennsylvania State was considered of prime importance.

Although research by academic librarians would seem to require library administrators' support, there have been mixed messages about this. In 1978, Bridegam²⁰ at Amherst College pointed out that, even with support, a research requirement for all librarians might lead to an emphasis on quantity rather than quality of research and on librarians' limited reference and other service responsibilities. In 1990, a study by Arlen and Santizo²¹ at the University of Oklahoma suggested that only three out of forty-three surveyed faculty at Association of Research Libraries institutions had release time for their required publications. In short, the research requirement did not generally have a related policy.

In 2006, Brannock, Jin, and Zelner²² started the Research Work Group at the University of Southern Mississippi to support and publicize research of tenure-track librarians. The university plans for a librarians' research lab, which would provide a quiet room with research-related books, computer software, and no e-mail or telephone. Finally, in 2007, Neville and Henry²³ at the University of South Florida surveyed Florida academic library administrators' support of librarians' research and travel funding. Full-time library professionals were supported similarly to those in Association of Research Libraries [ARL] institutions, but paraprofessionals and part-time librarians had less help. Academic librarians found scheduling

time for required research and other scholarly activities still difficult.

Librarians' research, particularly when supported by research and sabbatical leaves, has value for their faculty status, promotion, and tenure. In 1994, Black and Leyson²⁴ at Iowa State University emphasized the academic library environment with its criteria for academic scheduling, description of academic responsibilities, training and mentorship, teaching, research, and service, and communication of scholarly publications and other scholarly works. Black and Leyson noted that a research environment affects:

- understanding of the investigative process and knowledge of the research field;
- self-esteem and related communication with teaching and other faculty;
- sympathy with patron needs;
- progress toward the gaining of promotion, tenure, and salary;
- flexibility in the researcher.

These findings should be remembered when reading the Results section and when considering improvements to facilitate faculty research.

In 2006, Budd²⁵ at the University of Missouri-Columbia studied extensions of a 1991–1993 ARL survey and a 1995–1997 ACRL survey of faculty publishing groups to a 2002–2004 ARL group. There were some increases of mean numbers of total publications. In 2010, Oakland²⁶ issued "The Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report" for ACRL; this report cited several earlier studies. Both studies indicate that academic librarians produce more research as time goes on, making the issue of increasing importance to the academic and library communities as a whole.

Research can extend the knowledge of existing and new issues in academic libraries. In 2006, Neal²⁷ at Columbia University emphasized research and development programs in the academic library that covered information technology at each of the following levels: individual, organizational, professional, and national. In 2007,

Mullins, Allen, and Hufford²⁸ defined the ACRL research committee's ten projected areas for the future of academic libraries, all in need of further research. These areas include digitizing collections, librarians' skill sets responding to changing student and faculty populations, demand for faster access to services, intellectual property debates, increasing demand for technological services and funding, institutions evolving as businesses, students' perception of themselves as customers and consumers, distance learning, free public access to information, and privacy in electronic access. Therefore, this study hopes to add to the dialogue on academic research by assessing the opinions of library administrators for the benefit of the research community.

Methodology

In this study, the authors explored a sample of academic library administrators' perceived value of librarians' research. Their methodology was similar to that of Connie Van Fleet and Joan C. Durrance (1993,²⁹ 1994³⁰). Van Fleet and Durrance used a telephone survey to study research perceptions of leaders in public libraries.

In the summer of 2010, one author gathered data for the present study from brief telephone interviews with 23 academic library administrators. This sample was gathered from a randomly generated list of 40 university/college libraries. Each university/college library had an administrator and was sampled from the 2008 *American Library Directory*,³¹ which included 2601 academic libraries. To select institutions with research interests, only university/college libraries with at least 500,000 total volumes were chosen.

If several attempts at contacting the administrator produced no response, the researcher contacted the next library administrator on the list. If a library administrator had left his/her university library position, the author interviewed the interim administrator. Twenty-three of the 40 academic library administrators (57.5%) were successfully contacted for

telephone interviews. These included a Vice Provost for Library and Technology Services, an Associate Provost for Library and Information Services, sixteen Deans, two Directors, two Interim Deans, and an Interim University Librarian who characterized himself as a "frontline librarian."

The academic library administrators' response data were obtained from a brief, recorded telephone interview with each of the administrators. The instrument for the telephone interviews was adapted from a research survey previously used for leaders in public libraries (Connie Van Fleet and Joan C. Durrance, 1993,³² 1994³³). Engel and Robbins³⁴ supported this methodology in 2009. A print copy of this paper's survey instrument is shown in Appendix A. The instrument included the following:

- the administrator's name and title;
- name of the institution;
- whether it was a public or private university;
- whether it was an ARL-affiliated library;
- number of volumes in library;
- the ALA-accredited Library School at the university;
- the highest degree offered at the university;
- the administrator's telephone number;
- initial call and call-back dates.

Sample protocols for the telephone call and the interview included guarantee of anonymity for the administrator and university and a request for permission to record the interview for transcription.

Items 1–3 included perceived changes in academic library practice, upcoming issues/concerns, and the effect of the current economy on librarians' research. Items 4–9 concerned transmissions of ideas about academic library research. Items 10–12 covered encouragement of librarians' research. Items 13–19 concerned the value of librarians' research, requirements for tenure-/non-tenure-track librarians, and the value of academic librarians' research for the librarians, the library, the university, and the profession. Items 20–22 included

academic library administrators' self-descriptive information: administrator or frontline librarian, number of years as professional librarian, and highest academic degree obtained. Finally, the researcher offered to answer the academic library administrator's questions and to send a copy of the finished study. The data from the recorded telephone interviews were transcribed from a digital recording device.

Results

In the summer of 2010, data analysis of the telephone survey instrument began. Tables 1 and 2 give the characteristics of the academic library administrator sample of 23 interviewees. A total of 70 percent of the interviewees worked as Deans, 9 percent as Associate or Vice Provost for Library Services, 9 percent as Directors, and the remaining interviewees were interim administrators. Just over half (50%) of the academic library administrators were female. The highest academic degree(s) obtained by each academic library administrator varied. More than three-quarters (78%) had obtained one master's degree, 30 percent had two master's degrees, and 26 percent pos-

sessed a doctorate. Remaining academic achievements included one interviewee's ABD for the PhD and one interviewee's Certificate of Advanced Study. Nearly half (48%) of the academic library administrators had worked 31–40 years as professional librarians, 13 percent of the interviewees had worked <1–10 years as professional librarians, 13 percent had 11–20 years experience, 13 percent had 21–30 years, and 13 percent had more than 40 years' professional experience.

Title	Associate/ Vice Provost for Library Services	N=2	8.70%
	Dean	N=16	69.55%
	Director	N=2	8.70%
	Interim Dean	N=2	8.70%
	Interim University Librarian/Front Line Librarian	N=1	4.35%
	Total	N=23	100.00%
Gender	Female	N=12	52.17%
	Male	N=11	47.83%
	Total	N=23	100.00%

Highest Academic Degree Obtained	Doctorate	N=6	26.09%
	PhD, ABD	N=1	4.35%
	Two Master's Degrees	N=7	30.43%
	One Master's Degree	N=8	34.78%
	Certificate of Advanced Study	N=1	4.35%
	Total	N=23	100.00%
Number of Years Worked as Professional Librarian	<1–10	N=3	13.04%
	11–20	N=3	13.04%
	21–30	N=3	13.04%
	31–40	N=11	47.84%
	>40	N=3	13.04%
	Total	N=23	100.00%

TABLE 3
Academic Libraries Sample Characteristics

Total Number of Volumes	500,000–1,000,000	N=8	34.77%
	1,000,001–1,500,000	N=6	26.08%
	1,500,001–2,000,000	N=2	8.70%
	2,000,001–2,500,000	N=2	8.70%
	2,500,001–3,000,000	N=2	8.70%
	3,000,001–3,500,000	N=1	4.35%
	3,500,001–4,000,000	N=1	4.35%
	6,000,001–6,500,000	N=1	4.35%
	Total	N=23	100.00%
ARL Affiliated	Yes	N=3	13.04%
	No	N=20	86.96%
	Total	N=23	100.00%

Table 3 describes the characteristics of the sample. Only 3 percent of the academic libraries had 500,000–1,000,000 volumes, 26 percent had 1,000,001–1,500,000 volumes, and each of the remaining libraries had more than 1,500,000 volumes. A total of 9 percent of the academic libraries were not ARL-affiliated.

Table 4 gives the characteristics of the sample of the 23 interviewees’ universities. Eighty-seven percent were public universities. Eighty-seven percent offered doctoral degrees. Eighty-four percent did not have an ALA-accredited master’s degree program in library science. It should be noted that the sample of academic library administrators is small, and the given percentages for the descriptive variables do not necessarily generalize to the population of academic library administrators as a whole, just the libraries in the same demographic as those surveyed. Since most of the data were qualitative, each of the items 1–3 and each of the items 8–19 were content-analyzed. One

author reviewed the content of the 23 interviewees’ responses to each item and cited the most common themes of each item’s responses. This content analysis for each item is written into a separate paragraph in the Results section. The second author repeated the procedure for an inter-rater reliability check and found similar results.

Each of the items 4–7 had Likert-type response formats, and a mean and standard deviation were computed for each of these. The interviewees’ most commonly perceived theme concerning an important change in academic library

practice since 2000 was the increased digitization of collections. Other themes were the development of scholarly communication/open access movement, expanded instructional engagement of faculty and students, and repositioning of library organization and/or physical spaces. One administrator from a fairly large library at a public university had an exciting response:

We have started in the last several years...a scholar communication/open access movement for the campus. We have established and created a...learning commons in partnership with student services partners like our freshman year

TABLE 4
Universities’ Sample Characteristics

Support	Public	N=20	86.96%
	Private	N=3	13.04%
	Total	N=23	100.00%
University’s Highest Degree Offered	Doctorate Degree	N=20	86.96%
	Master’s Degree	N=3	13.04%
	Total	N=23	100.00%
Has ALA-Accredited Master’s Program	Yes	N=4	17.39%
	No	N=19	83.61%
	Total	N=23	100.00%

program office which offers several different programs for freshmen, learning services program, tutoring services, counselors, honors program, the athletic department, ROTC, etc.—where we are working on all kinds of different programs to support student retention and student success....[W]e are moving more and more into not just acquiring things digitally but reformatting what we have already digitally. We've established the institutional repository for the rest of the university.... So we've got thousands of faculty, and we also have theses and dissertations that we publish...as well as grant-funded and other non grant-funded publications. We host at least four peer-reviewed national online journals whose primary editors [are] on the faculty here at the university. So we are moving into more electronic information, more e-books or serials, or just information, and acquiring and digitizing our stuff more and more, working with student services.

This response characterizes the enthusiasm for digital and interdepartmental development that many of the other administrators shared.

Interviewees' most commonly perceived issues/concerns that will face academic librarians in the next decade were the economic downturn and/or budget cuts. These potential changes increased the need for the library's accountability and justification of value they add to the university. Other issues pertaining to information digitization included the library's changes in collection development practices, users' access to the Internet, the altered relevance of the library, human resources development in hiring and training librarians with computer and technology skills, an emphasis on service, and the changed role of the library from print material access to interface with a wide range of scholarly resources and student services.

Interviewees most commonly felt that the current economy had little, if any, effect on the value of their librarians' research. However, some interviewees mentioned one or more themes related to this effect. These included a greater emphasis on accountability of research and its resources, higher return on investments, faculty publications of more practical value, dealing with fewer staff, more vacancies, and less research time and travel, increased cost of research databases and interlibrary loans (fair use), and the need for promotion of the library with statistics and follow-up of published research to increase value of the university library. One administrator from a small library at a public university said:

Having a comfortable, welcoming library attracts students as much as a rec. center, but we just have to figure out a way to promote that. We are building a 54 million dollar rec. center on this campus, but the library is dog-eared and tired looking. Well I'd like to be able to promote that a little bit more when some of the statistics—I went to a building conference lately and some of the surveys showed that the library ranks #3 in the decision-making matrix of where a student goes. Well why aren't we talking about that more? I think there are things that we could be doing if we were a little bit savvier about making our case about that sort of thing.³⁵

Thus, despite concern with digitization and interdepartmental cooperation, administrators still focus on the physical library.

Table 5 gives the interviewees' perceived influence of methods on their thinking about research in academic libraries. Influence of methods was measured on a 1 (low) – 7 (high) rating scale. Interviewees perceived methods as influential for three of the four areas. The mean for influence of new social modules

such as blogs, Twitter, and Facebook was four; the mean for influence of informal discussions with colleagues was five; the mean for influence of reading professional journals was five; and the mean for the influence of professional meetings and conferences was five. It should be noted that the means had rather large standard deviations that minimized accurate interpretation of mean differences.

Interviewees also reported the title(s) of journals, online or print, that contributed to their knowledge of research in academic libraries. Most commonly, these journals/publications were *College and Research Libraries*, *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *Portal*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Also reported were *College and Research Libraries News*, and *Educause*. Journals/publications cited by only one or two interviewees included: Association of College and Research Libraries publications, *Computers and Libraries*, *Journal of Library Administration*, *Library Administration and Management*, *Library Collections Acquisitions*, *Technical Services*, *Library High Tech*, *Library Information Science and Research*, *Library Journal*, *Library Philosophy and Practice*, *Library Quarterly*, *Library Trends*, *University Business* (about campus technologies), and *Wilson Library Bulletin* (no longer published). One interviewee read the architectural publications *Design Communications*, *International Journal of Design*, and *Metropolis*. Another interviewee read journals in science and engineering. One interviewee reported no specific titles.

Seventeen of the 23 interviewees men-

tioned one or more areas in which they had published articles or books. Most commonly, these areas were related to the following: library administration; management, and leadership, and related fields; and technical services (including cataloging). One interviewee from a private university cited an interesting area of publication:

Last year I had a book chapter come out with one of my librarians, we co-authored. It was about library data and our section was specifically on telling library stories so that provosts and presidents could understand it.

This response emphasizes the importance of librarians' publications in terms understandable to a nonlibrary readership.

Varied areas of publishing—each mentioned by only one or two interviewees— included access services, collection/evaluation, disaster planning, embedded librarianship, government information services, human resources, journal use dynamics, library demographics, outsourcing, scholarly communication, technology and the Internet in libraries, and transforming research libraries. Few interviewees mentioned specific library-related research journals in which they had published. The ones mentioned included *College and Research Libraries*, *Journal of Library Administration*, *RQ*, an ACRL chapter, and the *Colorado Library Association Journal*. Seven interviewees reported either no publications or had not published in the area of library sciences.

Interviewees suggested one or more methods to encourage research activities in their libraries. Most commonly, tenure-track positions required or expected research activities and/or publishing. Research incentives, travel funds, and grants were given for participa-

TABLE 5
Influence of Methods on Academic Librarians' Research Ideas

Method	Influence of Methods		
	Mean	S.D.	N
Informal Discussions with Colleagues	4.73	1.52	22
Reading Professional Journals	5.16	1.34	22
Professional Meetings and Conferences	5.20	1.80	22
New Social Modules such as Blogs, Twitter, Facebook, etc.	3.95	1.50	22

tion in conference activities. Sabbaticals, minisabbaticals (reduced work load), and release time were encouraged. Shared communication about research included research roundtables, outside speakers, a research-writing club, robust committee structure, and communication via Twitter/Facebook/Wiki. Some interviewees also personally guided their librarians' research projects, edited, reviewed, and sometimes coauthored their work. One mentoring system included a paid consultant research mentor. Encouragement of research activities mentioned by only one or two interviewees included a research requirement in the job ad and discussion in the job interview, payment for faculty to take research classes, and awards for research. Only one interviewee did not encourage research activities.

Nearly all interviewees felt that time was the greatest obstacle academic librarians faced in keeping up with research in the field. Interviewees mentioned other related obstacles such as prioritizing time for daily workload rather than for research and lack of interest or motivation to do research. Obstacles mentioned by only one or two interviewees included the reduced number of colleagues with whom to discuss and to do research, the burgeoning amount of literature, the nature of some librarians' work not related to research opportunities, and the undervaluing of research studies in library literature. Also cited were librarians' lack of educational training in research and statistics and their library schools' portraying a research methodology course as an endpoint without encouraging further professional research upon graduation.

Interviewees noted one or more themes of academic library research they would like to see explored in the next decade. Most commonly, interviewees suggested research on the effects of changes in the library's mission, organization, and role, such as better integration of the library into campus activities, programs, and services. Another commonly mentioned theme was evidence-based research on

user needs and academic study patterns. Some interviewees noted that more research is needed on the impact of the economy, budgets, and justification of investments and expenditures.

Branching off from this theme, another theme included research on the impact of information literacy and bibliographic instruction, including guided literature reviews and how they affect research papers and academic success. One interviewee wanted to see research on the use of 30–100 top databases when seemingly only 5 percent of the databases account for 80 percent of the searches. Themes mentioned by only one or two interviewees included the library environment as study space, the barrier of copyright laws on access, the effectiveness of on-screen reading, the effect of Google mass digitization on technical services, the declining relevance of tenure, and changes needed in library schools to accommodate the newly emerging library.

Fifteen of the 23 interviewees answered that, "Yes," their institution required tenure-track librarians to do research. One responded that research was an expectation, not a requirement. Another interviewee said that the institution was in transition and revising standards in that direction. Five interviewees pointed out that either "No," their institution did not require tenure-track librarians to do research, they did not have a tenure-track system, or that research was not an evaluation criterion by itself. One interviewee did not answer the question.

Interviewees provided one or more examples of the value their librarians received from the research they conducted—most commonly professional recognition and awards. One interviewee noted receiving citations and contacts for further information on the research as a reward in and of itself. Also commonly pointed out were the partnerships with and the commonality from working with nonlibrary teaching faculty, including librarians' subject faculty. Finally, interviewees often mentioned librarians' internal research results as shared community practices

and services. Interviewees noted personal benefits of librarians' research: help for young faculty members' job assignments, personal rewards for making professional contributions, and greater marketability. Also mentioned were monetary rewards and promotions from the evaluation system as well as research results' justification of grant money. Finally, interviewees noted that the literature review for a research project helped librarians stay current and led to discovery of new ideas. Three librarians did not answer the question.

All institutions included in the sample feature tenure-track faculty outside the library. Two of the 23 interviewees responded that their institutions required non-tenure-track librarians to conduct research. One interviewee reported that the research requirement depended on the position, whether for a research grant or research assistant professor, not for a teaching professor. Four interviewees responded that their institution encouraged research by non-tenure-track librarians. Twelve interviewees mentioned that their institutions did not require non-tenure-track librarians to do research—either because there were no tenure-track librarians, the non-tenure-track positions did not require research, or the reason was not specified. Four interviewees did not answer or said they could not answer the question.

Twelve of the 23 interviewees gave examples of the value that their non-tenure-track librarians received from the research they conducted. Three of these interviewees felt the value was the same, or very similar, to that of tenure-track librarians. Interviewees mentioned wanting more tenure-track positions and general marketability. Other examples, each mentioned by only one interviewee, included sharing of research for staff development, digitization of special collections, stronger bonds with teaching faculty, possible raises and university recognition, and more job satisfaction through increased opportunities.

Interviewees suggested one or more examples of how librarians' research had

benefited the library. Most commonly, benefits included user studies of faculty and students and design of learning spaces, programs, and services. Additional benefits were development of websites, visibility for the library, research grants' return on investment, development of unique special collections, and new functionality of the digital library. Varied benefits of librarians' research, each mentioned by one or two interviewees, included design of single-term searching to access multiple subjects and databases, research on textbooks and resulting improved communication with the teaching departments, requirement of electronic media for theses and dissertations, tools for electronic publishing, development of a new inventory system for 3.3 million volumes, and new electronic databases to track productivity of faculty and academic staff.

Most interviewees gave one or more examples of how librarians' research had benefited the university. Most commonly, benefits of librarians' research included recognition for the university: one university project resulted in the researcher testifying twice before Congress. Librarians' research had also benefited the university by the end product of the research: instruction programs, the open-access movement, new ways of using PowerPoint, moving information literacy instruction online, partnership with a Vice President of Research, and creation of a statewide digital repository. Monetary benefits of librarians' research to the university included \$15,000–\$20,000 grant proceeds for library faculty/staff development and several grants in the past five years totaling \$500,000–\$750,000 for the library, all giving recognition to the university. Finally, benefits of librarians' research to the university included faculty supervision of research projects, aid in recruiting faculty, and collaboration research that advanced university system goals. Two interviewees said that librarians' research had not benefited the university.

Most interviewees noted one or more examples of how librarians' research

had benefited the profession. Most commonly, professional benefits of librarians' research comprised publications and/or presentations at local, national, and international conferences. Awareness and recognition of such research were mentioned: one librarian received the ALA Award for Outstanding Librarian in Information Literacy. Professional benefits also included cutting-edge research in metadata, GIS, and map cataloging that influenced the standards in the field, successful systems for an institutional repository, development of an international library, development of a commons area, and a comprehensive digital library.

Library administrators considered cross-disciplinary research and collaboration as further benefits to the profession from academic librarian research. For example, one program involved graduate students from different disciplines spending a semester in the library. They were encouraged to study librarianship, and ten of the seventeen fellows later attended library school.

Overall, library administrators perceived librarianship to be a profession with coherence; members read each other's research across disciplines. Other cited benefits to the profession included research with the statewide consortium to develop ContentDM and SFX technologies, data assessment, reference research, a bibliography, a collection of historical photographs, and marketing for the library and undergraduate community. Five interviewees felt that librarians' research had a weak, if any, benefit to the profession.

Discussion

Many of the values and benefits of librarians' research, as mentioned in the literature and this exploratory paper, are similar. They include fulfilling tenure-track requirements, enriching relationship with teaching faculty, library faculty recognition, improved services and programs, collaboration with others, research result application to daily issues, development as librarians, and improved knowledge of

the research field. This exploratory paper adds to the literature by using academic administrators' perceptions and by attempting to differentiate between perceived value to the research librarians, the library, the university, and the profession.

Academic library administrators' perceived current changes and future issues on university libraries included increased digitization of collections, scholarly communication, and expanded instructional engagement of faculty and students, as well as future economic downturn and budget cuts. Several methods that influenced administrators' thinking were professional meetings, reading professional journals, informal discussions with colleagues, and, to a lesser degree, new social modules such as Twitter and Facebook.

Academic library administrators used a myriad of methods to encourage their librarians' research. These included tenure-track requirements, research incentives, travel funds, grants, sabbaticals, release time, and shared communication about research (such as brown bag lunches, personal guidance, and mentorship). Finally, there was a substantial perceived interrelationship of how librarians' research benefited the librarian, the library, the university, and the profession. Recognition and new programs and services were thought to benefit all four areas, and monetary rewards were considered benefits for the first three areas.

Conclusion

In summary, this exploratory analysis suggests that a small sample of academic library administrators perceived multiple value of their librarians' research for the librarians, the library, the university, and the profession. Future research might include transition from this qualitative study to a quantitatively based national survey. Areas of future research suggested by the interviewees comprise evidence-based research about the users, the impact of the economy on research, how services and programs have affected academic success, and needed changes in the library schools to accommo-

date the newly emerging library. Academic library administrators also suggested other research goals: the effects of changes in the library's mission, organization, and university role such as greater integration into campus activities. One dean's goal for the librarians' research at the university seems particularly pertinent to conclude with: "We are everywhere you want us to be."

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Appendix A.

The Value of Research in Academic Libraries Telephone Survey* Final Draft—6/30/09

Administrator: _____ Telephone: _____
 Title: _____ Initial Call Date: _____
 Institution: _____ Call Back Time and Date: _____
 Volumes: _____ Public or Private: _____
 ALA Accredited School: _____ ARL Affiliated: _____
 Highest University Degree: _____

Telephone Contact:

This is Amy Slowik at Western Kentucky University Libraries. We're conducting a study to highlight the various research practices in academic libraries across the United States. We'd like to arrange a time when it would be convenient to ask you a few questions. When would be a good time to call back? (If asked, "it shouldn't take any longer than 15 minutes.")

Interview:

This is _____ at Western Kentucky University Libraries. This is a brief interview of research practices in academic libraries across the United States. Such practices include librarians' published research articles and/or exhibited scholarly works. No individuals or institutions will be identified in the report. If it's ok, I'd like to record this so we don't miss anything. Let's begin.

RECORD.

Question 1

1. _____, from your perspective, what do you see as the two or three most important changes in academic library practice that have occurred since 2000? (e.g., electronic databases)
2. What do you think are some of the issues/concerns that will face academic librarians in the next decade? Why these? (e.g., budget to pay for databases)
3. In what ways does the current economy affect the value placed on your librarians' research?

The next set of questions deal with TRANSMISSION OF IDEAS.

I'd like you to rate on a 1–7 scale how each of the following methods has influenced your thinking about research in academic libraries, 1 being low influence and 7 being high influence.

- | | Low Influence–High Influence |
|--|------------------------------|
| 4. Informal discussions with colleagues | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 5. Reading professional journals | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 6. Professional meetings and conferences | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 7. New social modules such as Blogs, Twitter, Facebook, etc. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 8. Can you think of some journals, online or print, that have contributed to your knowledge of research in academic libraries? | |
| 9. Have you published any library-related research articles or books? Mainly in what area? | |

The next set of questions deal with librarians' RESEARCH.

10. Have you encouraged research activity in your library? How? (e.g., research leaves)
11. What is the greatest obstacle that academic librarians face in keeping up with research in the field? (Explain) (e.g., time to read journal articles)
12. What kinds of academic library research would you like to see done in the next decade? (e.g., effectiveness of mobile future of libraries)

The next set of questions deal with the VALUE OF LIBRARIANS' RESEARCH.

13. Does your institution require tenure-track librarians to do research? (Yes or No)
14. Beyond tenure requirements, can you provide examples of the value your librarians received from the research they conduct?
15. Does your institution require non-tenure-track librarians to do research? (Yes or No)(*If the answer to question is 'No,' skip to Question 17.)
16. Can you provide examples of the value your non-tenure-track librarians received from the research they conduct?
17. Can you cite a few examples of how your librarians' research has benefited the library? (e.g., new services, delivery of information, etc.)
18. Can you cite a few examples of how your librarians' research has benefited the university? (e.g., grants, etc.)
19. Can you cite a few examples of how your librarians' research has benefited the profession? (e.g., advancement of knowledge, information to citizens, etc.)

Finally, there are a few questions about you.

1. Do you consider yourself primarily an administrator, frontline librarian, other?
2. How long have you been a professional librarian?
3. What is your highest academic degree obtained?

In closing:

_____, can I answer any questions for you? Would you like a copy of the results when the study is finished?

STOP

*Adapted from Connie Van Fleet and Joan C. Durrance, "Public Library Research: Use and Utility," in *Research Issues in Public Librarianship: Trends for the Future*, ed. Joy Greiner (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994), 1–16.

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