Preface

Academic libraries have always provided meaningful services for users and many traditional services, such as circulation, instruction, and research consultations, are still needed and valued by those users. However, in the twenty-first century, designing services that also engage both on-campus users and online students has become vital to academic library survival. Many students and faculty alike do not turn to the library first for either their research or their social needs. They often begin their research on the open web, only turning to librarians and library resources when they are unable find what they need. More and more students spend much of their time online connecting with peers and gathering information through various social media applications from the comfort of their dorm rooms or apartments. The advent of online learning has meant that many colleges and universities have an increasing number of students and faculty who are attending the institution virtually and never physically come to the library. Because of these changes in access to resources, social media habits, and location of library users, traditional services are evolving to meet the demands of a technologically connected audience that has multiple options for finding information outside of libraries. Libraries are also experimenting with modes of instruction that meet evolving information literacy needs. Outreach activities are being designed to attract on-campus users to the physical library and to connect online users with the library at their institution.

To say it is a challenging time for academic libraries is almost an understatement. Twenty-first century academic libraries are grappling with changes in technology, changes in how information is accessed, changes in student demographics, changes in pedagogy – and more. All of these make for uncertain, often unsettling times. The need to connect with users personally in both the physical and virtual library has never been stronger. It is increasingly important to build community among library users by implementing services that are collaborative, integrative, and social to ensure that the library stays relevant to the lives of students and faculty.

While the literature on the concept of building community in academic libraries is not very robust, there is ample evidence of a general trend toward building community in libraries since the late 1990s, as described on the American Library Association (ALA) website, Librarians Build Communities: An Initiative of the American Library Association (see http://www.ala.org/groups/lbc/story). This project grew out of ALA Past President Barbara Ford’s theme of “Libraries: Global Reach, Local Touch” and the Volunteer Day that she created as part of this theme. In 2013, then ALA President Maureen Sullivan encouraged members to participate in a new national initiative, The Promise of Libraries Transforming Communities, in an article titled “Community Building: Libraries Must Innovate and Engage” that ap-
Preface

appeared the March/April edition of *American Libraries* (see http://www.americanlibrariesmagazine.org/article/community-building). Libraries everywhere are recognizing the need to expand their repertoire of offerings, events, resources and services in order to meet increasingly diverse user needs and to remain relevant to users.

Much of ALA’s focus on building community through librarian volunteerism coincides with annual association conferences, yet the success and impact of the movement could be said to have influenced a growing recognition for the need to increase efforts in the realm of “local touch” in all types of libraries, including academic libraries. Academic libraries are employing a variety of means for extending their local touch, both in their physical spaces and through technology and virtual reach. Employing local touch to build community in physical libraries often means renovating or creating new-spaces to meet the social and collaborative needs of students and faculty. This can include the creation of coffee shops, tutoring centers, group study rooms, and other types of spaces in a central location on campus, such as the library. Additionally, academic libraries are expanding their use of technology to reach students and faculty as well as increasing their technology offerings for patron use both within the library and for accessing library services and resources remotely.

Technology provides some tools that can aid in efforts to establish a sense of community among library users. Chat services and web conferencing are means of deploying synchronous library instruction and research consultations to the virtual environment, for example, and social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter provide ways to interact with students and faculty socially wherever they may be. The implementation of such technical solutions allows users to actively engage with not only library services and resources, but also with librarians and other library staff members.

However, many solutions rely less on technology and more on building relationships through engaging activities and space design that support changes in the ways teaching and learning take place. Academic libraries are increasingly collaborating with other campus entities to package events and activities to highlight services in exciting ways that attract reticent users – both face to face and online.

Renovated spaces in academic libraries include technology-enriched options for both faculty and students to integrate new modes and strategies into their teaching and learning, as well as enhance their opportunities for collaboration. Such technology-enhanced spaces in libraries may include flexible classrooms equipped with multiple projection surfaces, allowing students to convene and work in groups, removing the traditional sage on the stage at the front of the classroom and allowing for more active learning among students in collaborative groups. These flexible teaching and learning spaces are equipped with furniture that can be easily moved and reconfigured into a variety of teaching options in order to maximize diverse learning styles and teaching strategies. It is increasingly common to see other student services sharing space in libraries, providing services such as tutoring, technology help, and writing support that used to be distributed around campus.

Outreach is an essential responsibility in all types of libraries for maintaining relevance among users, drawing in potential users and garnering continuing support. The evolving research habits and social practices of students both on campus and off contribute to the need for academic libraries to continuously review, revise, enhance, and assess their outreach efforts to insure that students’ information needs are being met. The plethora of literature on the topic of outreach in academic libraries indicates that it an ever-increasing area of focus. Other indicators of the integral role of outreach in academic libraries include a growing number of outreach librarian positions and professional organization divisions and
interest groups dedicated to the topic of outreach. Additionally, an emphasis on outreach is included in the strategic plans of more and more academic libraries, formalizing and heightening its importance. The boundaries and definitions of outreach among academic libraries are also expanding to encompass multiple perspectives.

Areas of outreach include efforts that take place within the library walls, such as curriculum and academic-support related events, as well as social events, often created through partnership efforts with other core entities on campus. There is a growing recognition among academic libraries of the value and benefits that stem from doing non-academic, social outreach to all types of constituencies. Outreach efforts in the social realm help to increase users’ awareness of the human element within libraries, the librarians and library staff who are also valuable library resources. Engaging with students, faculty, staff and the community on a social level greatly enhances their connection to and sense of community with the library. While some libraries develop more general outreach, others are identifying the need to target specific populations of library users. Additionally, libraries are extending their outreach efforts beyond the library walls across campus, within their communities, and especially in the case of land grant university libraries, across the state. Virtual outreach is increasingly important as well as many institutions experience rapid growth in online course and program offerings, leading to a growing number of students and faculty who may never set foot on campus, much less enter the physical library, and thus may lack awareness of library services and resources available to them. More and more academic libraries are providing collaborative, social, integrative resources, services and spaces in recognition of the need to continually evolve in an era of competing information environments. This allows libraries to not only to remain relevant to their users, but also to create a community of vested supporters.

Changes in services and resources have been implemented on a number of fronts by academic libraries. These changes include instruction modalities, outreach to specific audiences, outreach via participatory events and activities, and changes to physical spaces. This book is organized into sections around those four main topic areas, and each chapter presents one or more unique examples of library innovation. For libraries looking for innovative ways to connect to their campus communities, the examples provided here should provide not only inspiration but also practical applications that could be implemented successfully at any institution.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

Section 1. Instruction – A core function of academic libraries is to deliver information literacy instruction to meet the needs of users and the requirements of national standards, both those of the profession and of accrediting bodies. Providing meaningful information literacy instruction requires continual experimentation with delivery methods. It also means providing a variety of opportunities for both learning and engagement. In Chapter 1, Sheila Bonnard and Mary Anne Hansen of Montana State University share their experience engaging students through synchronous instruction sessions and research consultations by embedding instruction and building community in an online graduate program.

Authors Charlene Maxey-Harris and Lorna Dawes from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln describe in Chapter 2 efforts to integrate library instruction in to first-year undergraduate learning communities that were developed to enhance student learning and retention. Maxey-Harris and Dawes show that successful integration is the result of building relationships with the faculty and administration involved.
University of South Dakota librarians, Danille De Jager-Loftus and Abby Moore, are working to strengthen information literacy instruction for students before they enter college by establishing communication and building community among academic librarians, college programs, and high school teachers and librarians. In Chapter 3, they draw attention to the impact such partnerships can have on improving high-school-to-college readiness.

Section 2: Targeted outreach – Targeting a specific constituency with which to engage is a strategy a number of libraries represented here have successfully employed. The chapters in this section describe efforts to increase direct engagement with specific student groups. Beth Daniel Lindsay and Ilka Datig from New York University Abu Dhabi explain how they successfully implemented a student advisory group (SAG) in Chapter 4. By bringing student voices to the table when exploring changes and improvements to library services, these librarians strengthened the connection between the library and this community of users. Those students participating in the student advisory group become library ambassadors, so this connection is extended to the broader student population. Thus a SAG not only aids the library in improving services, policies and resources, it serves as a vehicle for community building.

Megan Stark and colleagues Samuel Meister and Wendy Walker from the University of Montana teamed up with two representatives from student government, Asa Hohman, and Mariah Williams, to digitize records of the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM). In Chapter 5, they describe how the project shifted from one of digitization to one in which the library and ASUM are working cooperatively to both manage and preserve these records for the long term. This more direct engagement, a departure from traditional liaison activity, resulted in both a successful project and an ongoing community building process.

Gustavus Adolphus College librarian Michelle Twait also targeted specific student groups in her efforts to build community with undergraduates. In Chapter 6, she explains how working with interns and student groups to reach their student peers allowed her small library to expand its reach. This successful peer-to-peer model could easily be implemented by other libraries.

International students are the target of Alessia Zanin-Yost’s (Penn State University Libraries) work described in Chapter 7. By focusing on the unique information literacy needs of this population, librarians can make connections and build relationships so the library becomes their “home away from home.” She offers tips on combatting library anxiety, on addressing the plagiarism issues often encountered by international students, and on collaborating with partners on campus.

Rachael Muszkiewicz describes Valparaiso University’s Christopher Center for Library and Information Resources’ (CCLIR) use of displays with interactive analog elements to engage students who come into the library. In Chapter 8, she shares how CCLIR staff discovered that students respond with more enthusiasm to analog displays than digital displays. In their experience, analog displays garner more of a personal connection with student patrons.

Section 3: Outreach events – In addition to targeting specific audiences with outreach efforts to promote library services and resources in general, academic libraries are increasingly creating both academic and social events to draw students and faculty into the library. Such activities also provide opportunities for librarians to connect with students and faculty in person and build a variety of relationships within the campus community.

In Chapter 9, Cindy Pierard, Josefine Smith and Caitlin Wells, all from New Mexico State University, discuss their successful implementation of a Sunshine Week program designed to foster civic engage-
ment. The program was the result of a partnership between the library and the journalism department, with support from an active library donor; the success of this community building and engagement contributed to the success of the outreach program. The authors provide detailed information about how the project was realized and offer suggestions for improvement, all of which would be transferable to other interested institutions.

Librarians from Louisiana State University (Cristina Caminita, Emily Frank, Rebecca Kelley, and Marty Miller) decided to engage their campus community through an open house event. Their Mardi Gras-themed event described in Chapter 10 resulted in a number of community building outcomes: between units in library, between the library and other campus entities; and between the library and its students, even drawing in non-users. While the event was deemed successful, the authors also share challenges associated with planning and executing such a large-scale event.

Kapi‘olani Community College librarians Joy Oehlers, Annie Keola Kaukahi Thomas and Joyce Tokuda are attempting to transform their library into an essential “third place” on campus, a desired destination for students, staff and faculty when they are between structured activities such as classes or meetings. They describe in Chapter 11 a variety of outreach events created in order to engage students, faculty and staff while they are visiting the library and to attract users who might not yet consider the library an important part of their academic world.

Boise State University (BSU) Library faculty and staff are integrating activities and events into their daily efforts, creating a culture of outreach both within the library as well as across campus, according to librarian Elizabeth Ramsey. In Chapter 12, she shares how through active participation at cultural and professional development events, a variety of no-cost activities and displays, and the creative use of social media, BSU library faculty and staff are actively integrating themselves in a spectrum of efforts to support of university research and learning communities.

**Section 4: Library spaces** – The library as a physical space is still important to an academic institution; library buildings have long been considered constituting the “heart” of a campus. However, user needs and expectations are evolving. In order to stay relevant as a physical space, academic libraries are renovating or adapting spaces to meet the research and collaborative needs of students and faculty. These efforts are often done in partnership with other campus entities, to be able to offer students and faculty the convenience of a spectrum of essential services and resources to within the library’s walls.

Kymberly Goodson describes the new Learning Spaces Program at the University of California San Diego library in Chapter 13. This program established library learning spaces designed to engage users, to build a sense of community and patron ownership, and to establish a culture of assessment among program staff. The result of these innovations is a library-facility where students feel welcomed and supported in their academic life.

Librarians Ingrid Ruffin, Michelle H. Brannen and Megan Venable explain how the University of Tennessee (UT) Libraries’ recent renovation was combined with efforts to offer a broad range of outreach efforts to a diverse user population. Chapter 14 describes how these changes established this academic library as the campus’s main street, or central gathering place, for the university and local community.

Recognizing the benefits of collaborating with library patrons to develop services and capacities, the Columbia University Teachers College Library created a community engagement plan to guide the renovation of a major public space in the library. According to Chapter 15 authors Laura Costello, Hui Soo Chae and Gary Natriello, connecting with faculty, staff, and students with various levels of investment in the library helped ensure the creation of a space that can flex and grow-to accommodate a variety of evolving needs of their patrons.
Preface

Kristin J. Henrich from the University of Idaho discusses efforts to create partnerships and build community among library stakeholders by offering targeted programming. As described in Chapter 16, the primary goal of these outreach efforts was to create a vested community of constituencies to collaborate on a five-year library redesign plan.

Cinthya Ippoliti presents in Chapter 17 work done at the University of Maryland’s McKeldin Library Terrapin Learning Commons (TLC) to create partnerships with various campus entities to provide essential technology and technology support for students and faculty. These collaborative efforts have resulted in a spectrum of technology offerings and support through a tiered model that utilizes student expertise during expanded service hours. These services are available both face-to-face within the library as well as online for remote users.

This book features innovative projects and ideas that inspire engagement with academic libraries and librarians, resulting in a stronger community of library users in physical spaces as well as through digital means. The intent of the book is not to theorize about possibilities but to present concrete examples and case studies that have been implemented and assessed in a wide variety of academic libraries. The examples highlighted here will provide other academic libraries models of successful and innovative ideas to aid them in efforts to engage with users and build community at their own institutions.

Current academic library practitioners who are striving to keep public services, resources and spaces relevant for users will be inspired by the information presented book to implement some of these ideas in their own libraries. Academic librarians, distance educators, and program plannners in libraries will also benefit from the examples and case studies that are featured. Additionally, because many of the examples here involve partnerships with other campus offices, departments, and programs, the contents of this book will be of interest to academic institutions in general.

Sheila Bonnand
Montana State University, USA

Mary Anne Hansen
Montana State University, USA