

Academic library relevance in 2020 – ‘indeed!’

Volume 48 Issue 2: issue due to Emerald March 3, 2020. [1]

There it is. Our deadline.

I had intended to start the editorial for Volume 48 Issue 2 several times since February 2020. I had a good outline. I intended to focus on academic library relevance in 2020. Specifically, I intended to highlight the journal’s special issues on academic libraries and the 45th President (Volume 48 Issue 1) and academic libraries and the costs of higher education (Volume 48 Issue 3).

Fast forward to March 2020. I have revised the outline several times. The truth is that current events have impacted even my best intentions to sit down and write the editorial.

The news and uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus (COVID-19) has many of us in higher education focused on emergency preparedness, as well as business, operations and service continuity. The news and uncertainty have many of us in libraries, and certainly academic libraries, taking a deeper look into the resources, services and spaces we provide. On my campus, and I am sure on many other campuses, our library continues to work in close partnership with the University and our campus partners to take the necessary steps to protect and safeguard our community. On my campus, again, as I am sure on many other campuses, the safety and well-being of our users and staff is our utmost priority.

Taking into consideration the public health recommendations for social distancing and potential reduced staff capacity in the short term, many libraries are changing their operating hours.

Given the rapidly evolving information landscape, many libraries are developing curated guides for users seeking information about the COVID-19 outbreak. Connecting students, faculty and staff with academic resources and library services, these guides serve as an introduction to COVID-19 or as a starting point for further health information research.

Libraries are also encouraging users to take advantage of the many remote services available. Numerous resources are available electronically and in many of our libraries, library staff is available 24/7 to help users navigate and access materials and services.

In addition, many libraries are actively encouraging their staff and users to review and follow the guidance and information provided by their institutions and public health. Most importantly, we highly encourage users to adhere to the guidance of frequent hand washing, especially when visiting our facilities and using public resources such as computer workstations, copiers and self-checkout stations.

We are navigating an evolving situation, and we are continuing to post new information on our websites and other communications channels as updates occur.

Back to the future. When I initially outlined this Editorial, I intended to focus on academic library relevance in 2020. Our responses to the COVID-19 outbreak affirm our relevance loud and clear.

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Note

1. www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/products/journals/author_guidelines.htm?id=RSR (accessed 7 March 2020).