

ASERL

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEASTERN RESEARCH LIBRARIES

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEASTERN RESEARCH LIBRARIES, INC.
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A YEAR UNLIKE ANY OTHER

Charles Dickens famously wrote about the best of times and the worst of times. The 2019-2020 year defies such simple description. Our nation is deeply divided. Social unrest is challenging American cities and towns to confront systemic racism. And the COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed untold personal and economic tragedies with no clear end in sight.

ASERL has weathered challenging times in the past. We have come to say, "When things get tough, ASERL gets busy." And true enough, busy we did get – offering a suite of new programs to support our members during The Great Disruption, serving more people both in our region and around the country like never before.

ASERL is also mapping its future like never before. In June 2020, we published "ASERL Ahead" a three-year strategic plan based on nearly two years of research and input from our membership and like-minded organizations around the US and Canada. "ASERL Ahead" centers the organization's energies in four areas: Continued support for innovation within the profession, an explicit focus on developing programs that can improve diversity, equity, and inclusion at our member libraries, ensuring our members remain engaged with ASERL in the midst of widespread retirements and other staff turnovers, and securing the proper tools and other infrastructure we need to remain a robust organization into the future. ASERL has also made careful reductions to our operating budget to ensure a flat dues structure for the year ahead, in support of the financial challenges faced by many of our member libraries.



ANNE PRESTAMO
ASERL's Board President
2019-2020

"In the midst of such uncertainty, it's reassuring that ASERL has such a long track record of service to its members," commented Anne Prestamo, Dean of Libraries at Florida International University and ASERL's Board President in 2019-2020. "The membership has invested wisely in strategic programs and strong personnel to ensure ASERL continues to be a locus for collaboration for years to come."

In June 2019, ASERL members agreed to support a new Program Officer for ASERL to enhance its highly acclaimed Professional Development programming and create a new set of programs focusing on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. After a lengthy recruiting process and a rich field of candidates, ASERL selected Elaina Norlin to take on this role – see page 2 for Elaina's bio. The pandemic re-arranged the initial plan for her work, but we have quickly pivoted. Elaina is convening a huge array of online programming that highlights the exciting, innovative work of ASERL libraries and offers initial insights into the organizational development topics that will be prominent as the new DEI program unfolds.

Similarly, ASERL's Shared Print programming also marked important milestones in the past year. Now in its tenth year, the Scholars Trust print journal archive undertook an important partnership with the Center for Research Libraries to conduct a first-ever comprehensive analysis of print journal holdings across 33 ASERL libraries. These data are paying off in multiple ways: ASERL libraries are making new, long-term retention commitments at an unprecedented pace, nearly reaching our collection growth goal within a few months' time. The program also conducted its decennial comprehensive program review and received unanimous affirmation of its enduring value.

Also in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ASERL launched a series of Copyright Office Hours to share specialized knowledge across our membership, implemented a peer-to-peer consulting service, planned a repository for sharing online instructional materials, and are exploring ways members might coordinate print purchasing for specialized subject areas.

ASERL ventures into the next program year and its myriad ambiguities in a strong position. As always, we are committed to supporting our members and their roles in teaching, learning, and research. How we support each other may change over time, but our promise of serving our members will not waiver.



WELCOMES ELAINA NORLIN



A significant milestone for the 2019-2020: ASERL added its first new staff role in more than a decade! Based on member feedback, ASERL members agreed to support a new full-time Program Coordinator role to expand Professional Development programming and create new programs in support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. A Search Committee was appointed in July 2019 to review more than three dozen applications. After numerous interviews online and in-person, the Search Committee unanimously selected Elaina Norlin for the role. She started with ASERL on November 1, 2019.

Elaina has a broad and interesting professional background. For 10 years, she served as Executive Director of the African American Research Library and Cultural Center, a part of the Broward County Public Library system. She has extensive consulting experience, worked for the US Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), OCLC, and as a tenured librarian at the University of Arizona. She earned her MLIS degree from University of Illinois. Her third book, "Creating Amazing Library Work Organizations," will be published by ALA Press in early 2021.

“ *It has been a true honor getting to know everyone this year. I’m looking forward to continuing to meet and support the members into the future.* ”



TOP 5 WEBINARS 2019-2020

1

**WHY DO MOST DIVERSITY
TRAININGS FAIL?**

586 Attendees

2

**YES, YOU CAN SCAN
THAT TEXTBOOK**

341 Attendees

3

**SPECIAL COLLECTIONS: HOW
DO WE PLAN ON REOPENING?**

231 Attendees

4

**HOW WE TALK,
HOW WE WORK**

223 Attendees

5

**ARE LEADERS/MANAGERS
BORN, OR MADE?**

175 Attendees

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

- Since March 2020, we have expanded our professional development series to include:
 - Leadership and Management
 - Instructional Design
 - Video Creation
 - Appreciative Inquiry
 - Conflict Resolution
 - Digital Curation
 - Disaster Planning
 - DEI Programming
- Year to date, we have provided over 50 webinars to over 15,000 registrants.
- ASERL recently joined the ICOLC Professional Development Alliance. This allows ASERL to expand our reach nationwide and provide more opportunities for our member libraries to shine.
- ASERL continues to receive compliments on the quality of our webinars.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

- ASERL has formed two DEI Taskforces -- one focusing on Recruitment; the other examining Retention issues -- which will conduct research on successful national and international models. The Taskforces will also be providing professional development opportunities through webinars and specialized workshops exclusively for member libraries.
- ASERL will also continue to identify opportunities for professional staff and diverse librarians to present on a wide range of topics through our Professional Development webinar series.
- Starting in December 2020, ASERL will begin a series "Why Librarians Leave the Profession" that takes a close look at how to retain a diverse workforce.
- Elaina Norlin will also conduct future webinars on recruitment, onboarding training and how to develop DEI vision statements.

As previously noted, FY2020 was a banner year for Scholars Trust – realizing unprecedented growth during unprecedented times. As of June 30, 2020, the archive contained 51,473 print journal titles retained in 62 locations. This represents an increase of 7,015 journal titles, and 10 new locations since 2019. Approximately 78% of retained titles are unique within the archive; less than 2% of titles are retained by three or more libraries.

Over the past year, 33 ASERL libraries have been actively engaged in a group-wide collection analysis and retention project supported by comparative data provided by the Center for Research Libraries (CRL). As a group, ASERL established a retention model to guide the future selection/nomination of retained titles and set a goal of securing 4,500 new print journal title commitments by 2021. Each

library was provided a list of nominated print journal titles that the library was asked to consider retaining for Scholars Trust. As of June 2020, ten libraries had selected 2,870 titles for retention, well over halfway to the program goal. The project continues into 2021 as libraries juggle shifting priorities as a result of the pandemic.

The ASERL Print Journal Retention Program – now known as Scholars Trust – was founded ten years ago. As part of our long-range program plan, 2020 is the year for the first decennial program review. Scholars Trust libraries unanimously affirmed that the program continues to provide value to the participating libraries. The second program review is scheduled for 2030; currently, participating libraries have agreed to retain the print materials through December 31, 2035.



Another of ASERL's legacy shared print programs, the Collaborative Federal Depository Program (CFDP) was established in 2006 to explore options for improving the management of, and access to print publications and maps distributed as part of the Federal Depository Library Program. Today, 43 libraries serve as Centers of Excellence (COE), with collections that include six Cabinet-level agencies, one format collection (maps), two subject collections (Panama Canal and Cuba), and over 200 SuDoc classifications. The ASERL program continues to serve as a national model for other groups seeking to improve the management of their FDLP collections.

The ASERL Documents Disposition Database, developed and hosted by the University of Florida, continues to support the management of FDLP Collections in the Southeast Region. Of the 297 depository libraries in the geographic area served by this program, 231 are using the database to manage their disposition process. In the past year, more than 9,500 items were added to FDLP collections as a result of this disposal-adoption process, of these approximately 4,600 were selected to enrich COE collections. Since the database was established in 2012, more than 96,750 items have been added to FDLP collections in the Southeast region, with almost half of these items directly supporting COE collections.

ASERL is, at its heart, a trust community. We have a long history of hosting important conversations and nurturing critical relationships among colleagues, many of whom also become friends. This past year included retirements for several longtime thought leaders in our community. We offer heartfelt best wishes those who are moving on to new horizons and whatever their futures may bring, and we look forward to welcoming and engaging with their successors in the months ahead.



In February 2020 – just before the world realized the COVID-19 threat – **Barry Baker** had the good fortune to retire from his role of Dean of Libraries at the University of Central Florida after 23 years in the role, and more than 50 years working in the region’s libraries. His work to enlarge and improve the John C. Hitt Library is a lasting legacy, as well as his awards and recognitions from numerous organizations across the profession.



Catherine Murray-Rust stepped down as Dean from Georgia Tech after 12 years with the Institute. She has a new book on the way, so we suspect she is not planning to fully retire. Who knows when we might cross paths with her again? GT offered this send-off: <https://library.gatech.edu/news/georgia-tech-libraries-bid-farewell-dean-murray-rust>.



In June, **John Ulmschneider** retired following 20+ years of service to Virginia Commonwealth University. John spent his entire career working in ASERL libraries. Deborah Jakubs offered remarks in his honor at our May 27 meeting. John’s service to VCU is highlighted with tremendous milestones, notably the library renovation/expansion and VCU’s admission into ARL. Additionally, he was named the ACRL’s Academic/Research Librarian of the Year – see <https://www.library.vcu.edu/about/news/2020-news/dean-and-vcu-university-librarian-named-academic-librarian-of-the-year.html>.



Frances Coleman has retired from Mississippi State University following 51 years of service, including 23 years as Dean of Libraries. A half-century of service to a single institution has to be some kind of record for ASERL! We did not have lead time to offer remarks at our May meeting, so the ASERL Board passed a resolution in her honor.



Lastly, the **Library of Virginia** discontinued their ASERL membership on June 30, 2020 following 20+ years of support. In past decades, every State Library in the Southeast belonged to ASERL, when dues were nominal and ASERL was mostly a social organization. The other State Libraries dropped their membership as our staff grew and costs increased, COSLA strengthened its own programming, and ASERL’s programming became more specialized to the needs of research libraries. We are grateful for LVA’s longstanding support of ASERL and are thankful for their contributions to our work over the years. LVA’s Mary Clark continues to serve on the Steering Committee for our Collaborative Federal Depository Program.

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEASTERN RESEARCH LIBRARIES BALANCE SHEET AS OF JUNE 30, 2020

ASSETS	TOTAL
CURRENT ASSETS	
Bank Accounts	
1003-10 Cash-Commerce Checking	\$794,471.88
Total Bank Accounts	\$794,471.88
Accounts Receivable	
1300-10 Accounts Receivable	\$307,950.28
Total Accounts Receivable	\$307,950.28
Other Current Assets	
1402-10 PrePaid Expenses-Projects	\$3,637.00
Total Other Current Assets	\$3,637.00
Total Current Assets	\$1,106,059.16
TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,106,059.16
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
LIABILITIES	
Current Liabilities	
Credit Cards	
2100-10 CC Burger	\$348.00
2101-10 CC Cole-Bennett	\$153.62
Total Credit Cards	\$501.62
Other Current Liabilities	
2401-10 Def Income KUDZU Courier	\$82,516.00
2402-10 Def Income ASERL Dues	\$335,800.00
2403-10 Def Income Project Fees	\$2,100.00
2404-10 Def Income Spring Meeting	\$1,650.00
2407-10 Def Income Prof Dev/DEI Programming Fee	\$102,960.00
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$525,026.00
Total Current Liabilities	\$525,527.62
Total Liabilities	\$525,527.62
Equity	
3100-10 Reserve Fund	\$379,602.72
3310-10 KUDZU Fund	\$7,588.53
3320-10 Courier Svc Fund	\$121,786.42
3321-10 SE Res Sharing Conf	\$3,527.86
3341-10 Digital Projects Fund	\$7,000.00
Net Income	\$61,026.01
Total Equity	\$580,531.54
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$1,106,059.16