



## **Library Accessibility Alliance Adds New Partners**

### **GWLA and WRLC to bolster Accessibility Awareness, Assessment, Outreach**

In January 2020, the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) and the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) joined forces to launch the “Library Accessibility Alliance” (LAA), a program seeking to ensure all library users have equitable access to information.

LAA has continued a process begun by BTAA in 2016 for evaluating electronic resource platforms and collections, [publicly posting the evaluations for review by vendors, libraries, and users](#). To date, 65 different platforms have been evaluated. The group has also drafted and [recommended accessibility licensing language](#), and provided a series of webinars to increase awareness about accessibility issues for its member libraries.

At its launch, an eight-person Steering Committee was named to provide direction for the work. A year later, two additional research library consortia have joined LAA: The partnership now includes the Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA) and the Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC).

Geneva Henry, Dean of Libraries and Academic Innovation at George Washington University, thanked the LAA for their leadership. “Digital accessibility is a major concern, but libraries do not have the expertise or capacity to do it individually. Working collectively to address this need is the only realistic option. Joining the LAA is a no-brainer.”

Joni Blake, Executive Director of the Greater Western Library Alliance said, “We are delighted to be joining LAA. Removing barriers to access for everyone in our campus communities is a priority for all GWLA member institutions. Partnering with publishers and our consortial colleagues from around the country to achieve these goals greatly enhances the project’s impact.”

With the addition of new partner organizations, LAA has also adjusted its operating structure and updated its programmatic goals. The Alliance is now led by a Steering Committee that includes one representative from each participating consortium and an Action Committee that includes three representatives per consortium. Each participating consortium also has the option of naming a library dean/director to help guide the strategic direction of the Alliance.

For the 2021 program year, the Alliance will focus its energies on continued evaluation of library e-resources, assessing the impact of previous LAA work, developing new training content for people working in LAA-affiliated libraries, and creating new communications and outreach activities – including the development of a new, dedicated LAA website.

Rob Van Rennes, BTAA Associate Director, Library Initiatives said, “We’re excited to welcome our new partners and strengthen our voice to build on the meaningful accessibility work that’s been started by our members. Significant changes in equity that benefit the whole of society accelerates when we take collective action.”

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