



THE FUTURE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

INNOVATION AND CHANGE



2026 Conference Program

The Future of Academic Libraries: Renewal, Innovation, and Change

June 17, 2026 • Virtual Conference

CONFERENCE THEME

The theme of this year's conference is *The Future of Academic Libraries: Renewal, Innovation, and Change*. Institutions of higher education are increasingly navigating the intersection of innovation and improvement, user support, and organizational renewal. Libraries across the country are exploring innovative ways to integrate emerging technologies across all departments. These advancements are reshaping the physical and digital spaces of libraries, enhancing academic resources, improving accessibility, and redefining user engagement. In addition to embracing these changes and new technologies, libraries are recognizing their critical role in supporting mental wellbeing for both users and staff. With rising mental health challenges in academic settings, libraries are uniquely positioned to offer restorative spaces, provide stress-relief programming, and foster supportive communities. Libraries can also lead the way in adopting change management strategies, ensuring that technological transformation and cultural shifts are met with resilience, adaptability, and a focus on overall wellbeing.

The future of libraries will require a comprehensive approach—where innovation in technology, mental health initiatives, and organizational renewal work together to build resilient, dynamic, and supportive environments. This theme invites presentations that address how libraries can leverage new tools while also prioritizing mental health and wellbeing, driving positive change for the better, and envisioning a future that empowers both users and staff.

BREAKOUT SESSION #1: 9:30 – 10:30AM

A. AI in Praxis: Integrating AI Literacy into a Modern Information Literacy Course

Abstract: Academic libraries are rapidly evolving, and conversations about innovation and change must consider Artificial Intelligence (AI) as it becomes integrated into daily life. At Austin Peay State University's Woodward Library, AI literacy is a core component of a for-credit course, Modern Information Literacy and AI Skills. Students learn about traditional information literacy practices alongside AI-focused skills, including prompting, plagiarism, and ethical and environmental impacts. The course culminates with a personal information literacy framework, guided by Paulo Freire's concept of praxis, requiring students to critically examine their relationship with information and thoughtfully apply the knowledge gained to real-world contexts. This approach fosters self-directed learning and equips students with critical thinking skills to build a strong, adaptable information literacy framework.

Learning Objectives:

- Attendees will explore strategies for integrating AI literacy into information literacy instruction.
- Attendees will learn how to develop personal information literacy frameworks that encourage critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and reflection.

Scott Shumate is the Lead Librarian of Digital Services at Austin Peay State University where he has served in multiple capacities since 2006. He holds an M.S.I.S. from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He is responsible for the library's digital initiatives, including its website, institutional repository, digitization efforts, and other emerging technologies. He co-teaches the library's credit-bearing Modern Information Literacy and AI Skills course. His research focuses on AI literacy and its impact on education and society, including algorithmic bias, data privacy, environmental impact, and academic/professional integrity. He has presented locally and internationally on the topic of AI literacy and the development of the personal information literacy framework he pioneered alongside his colleague, Jenny Harris. He serves on the university's AI Task Force and works with faculty to introduce ethical and responsible AI practices into their courses.

Jenny Harris is the Associate Director of Library Services at Austin Peay State University's Felix G. Woodward Library. She holds an M.S.L.S. from the University of Kentucky. Jenny helps shape the library's strategic direction, drives goal-setting initiatives, supports data-informed decision-making, and fosters critical thinking skills. She co-teaches the library's credit-bearing Modern Information Literacy and AI Skills course, which incorporates a personal information literacy framework that she co-developed alongside her colleague, Scott Shumate. Her research interests include critical information literacy and AI literacy, user-centered library assessment, and social identity and belonging in higher education.

Stephanie Bandel is the Lead Librarian of Resource Management at Austin Peay State University where she has served since 2023, having previously worked as a children's librarian and music librarian at other institutions. She holds an M.L.I.S. from the Valdosta State University. She oversees the development, assessment, and management of the library's monographs and serials collections and is the Federal Depository Loan Program Coordinator for Austin Peay. She researches faculty onboarding and attrition, artificial intelligence, and information literacy in higher education. She has presented on information and AI literacy alongside her colleagues at multiple conferences across the nation and feels passionate about the ethical implications of widespread artificial intelligence use.

Rhianna Loy is a junior at Austin Peay State University majoring in technical and creative writing. She has an A.S. in general studies and expects to complete her B.S. by Spring 2027. She was part of the second cohort of students taking LIBR 2001 and continues to utilize her personal information literacy framework in her academic career. She presented at Austin Peay's second annual AI symposium about her experience in the library's information and AI literacy course. Her presentation, titled AI Literacy: Lessons from a "Modern Information Literacy and AI Skills" Student, informed students and faculty alike in the student perspective of AI use in the current academic climate. She is a co-author of a chapter in the forthcoming book *The Student and AI* with Professors Bandel, Harris, and Shumate. She has worked for Austin Peay's two literary journals, *The Mud Red Review* and *Zone 3*, and aims to continue working with literary journals as an editor.

B. Making Room to Care for Each Other: Creating Wellness and Lactation Rooms in an Academic Library

Abstract: As academic libraries increasingly support "the whole person", students and patrons are in need of (and expecting) spaces to meet their wellness needs. Fairfield University's DiMenna-Nyselius Library recently created a Wellness Room, as well as a separate Lactation Room, partnering with key campus stakeholders for collaborative planning, funding, and institutional support. The session will review the planning process, advocacy, policy development, space design, and marketing. Practical considerations such as accessibility, privacy, equipment needs, and sustainable management of the spaces will be shared.

Lisa Thornell is the Head of Library Outreach & Communications at Fairfield University's DiMenna-Nyselius Library. In addition to overseeing library marketing and programming, she serves as the liaison to several academic departments and provides research and instructional support to students and faculty. She has a BA in Art History/Studio Art from Marist University, MSLIS from Long Island University, and MFA in Creative Writing from Fairfield University. Lisa is also a poet and serves as an assistant editor at two literary journals, *Brevity* and *Salt Bloom*.

C. Another “Why Can’t I Just Google It?” Presentation: Large Language Models and Viral Misinformation

Abstract: Generative AI hallucinations are blurring the line between fact and fiction at an unprecedented scale. This presentation demonstrates how viral misinformation propagates through web search engines and large language models, how LLMs reproduce existing misinformation and generate novel hallucinations, and how academic researchers are exploiting these systems for professional advancement. Original research into AI hallucinations will also be shared. Attendees will gain an understanding of how large language models used for conversational information retrieval contribute to the current misinformation landscape. They will leave with practical, actionable strategies for helping students critically evaluate potentially misleading, distorted, or false information in an era of rapidly evolving AI technology.

Daniel DuPont (he/him) is a librarian and associate professor at Delgado Community College in New Orleans. He is the President of the Louisiana Chapter of ACRL and the Treasurer of COSUGI, the SirsiDynix users group. Daniel has 2 cat children and 1 human child and reads a frankly unhealthy number of books each month. All of his presentations and papers can be found here.

D. Accessibility Processing at Scale: Lessons from Course Reserve and Interlibrary Loan

Abstract: Colorado State University has been striving to make their Course Reserve material meet WCAG accessibility guidelines since Fall 2025. Recently we have expanded this processing into our Document Delivery workflows. This session will share our lessons learned and processes as we shift from staff led to student driven accessibility processing on thousands of scanned documents.

Matthew Diven – One month after Y2K, Matt made the fateful and bold career decision to move from food service to library student employee while enrolled at the University of New Mexico. In 2007 he failed successfully into an entry level job at Colorado State University. Starting as a borrowing technician and moving through lending supervision, he stumbled into his childhood dream of becoming a university professor in 2025 when he became Unit head of Resource Sharing at Colorado State University. He currently supervises both Resource Sharing and Course Reserves while also serving as the chair of the Colorado Resource Sharing Conference Planning Committee, where he has served since 2016.

BREAKOUT SESSION #2: 10:45- 11:45AM

E. Conjuring Discussion in the Classroom

Abstract: How do we get students to talk to us? Is the Socratic Method dead? Are we too online to communicate in group settings? Active learning is now common practice in library instruction, but engaging with the material is a small piece of the learning process. It is the sharing of ideas that leads to growth and constructive feedback. Studies show that collaborative learning and discussion is beneficial to first-generation college students and lowers anxiety associated with academic settings. However, student engagement in discussion can be difficult to generate. This presentation will begin with an overview of engagement methods and highlight studies about student anxiety regarding “negative evaluation.” The session will include time for attendees to share their own stories of struggle and triumph of engaging students in class discussion.

Objectives:

- Identify why students struggle with class discussion.
- Describe a variety of classroom engagement techniques.
- Integrate discussion strategies into lesson plans.

Ariela McCaffrey, Reference and Instruction Librarian at Connecticut State Community College Three Rivers, has 25 years of experience in teaching and research assistance. In addition to her M.L.I.S., she has a master’s in education and currently manages the Student Library Assistant Program at the Three Rivers Library.

F. Hear Me Out: One librarian’s journey with disability

Abstract: The objectives of this presentation are to increase usage/instruction on using the accessibility tools and empathy and awareness of patrons with disabilities. During the presentation, which will include a slideshow and live demonstrations of various databases’ accessibility features, attendees will increase their understanding of “invisible” disabilities, and learn some tips and tricks to assist with their own or patrons’ needs. This presentation will show the value of Zoom to those who

have various disabilities as well as keeping the accessibility features of databases, such as transcripts on Films on Demand videos and the “listen” and increase font features of the Opposing Viewpoints database in mind for both themselves and patrons.

Caitlin Cooper is an Associate Professor at Delgado Community College and has been a full-time academic librarian since 2006, first at Nunez Community College and then, since 2013, at Delgado. She has a B.A. in Social Studies Education from Southeastern, an M.A. in History from UNO, and an M.L.I.S. from LSU. Her main function is collection development but she loves teaching the bibliographic instruction modules and creating LibGuides. She has served on the Board of the NOLA Information Literacy Collective, service as Vice-Chair, and has been an active member of the Louisiana Library Association, serving as an Academic Section Officer as well as on several committees.

G. Everyone’s a Curator: Integrating Interoperability and Sustainable Digital Curation Practices in the ChatGPT Era

Abstract: The future of academic libraries is digital and visual. This workshop offers attendees an instruction model which explores digital and visual literacy standards through a lesson plan suitable for archivists, special collections, and academic librarians, though it can be easily adapted to any teaching environment.

Attendees will:

- learn how to create their own digital exhibit using web-based software and primary source materials available in interoperable formats
- explore concepts of environmental sustainability, interoperability, resource sharing, metadata, permissions, fair use, and copyright
- develop student outcomes focused on digital curation skills and understanding the impact of everyday choices when using and sharing multimodal media online
- engage with learning outcomes from Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy (SAA/RBMS) and the Framework for Visual Literacy in Higher Education (ACRL)
- participate in an active workshop; attendees may need a laptop or desktop computer to practice easily
- leave with a lesson plan, resource list, and a fired-up imagination!

Adrienn Mendonca-Jones is an Online Student Outreach Specialist for Indiana University Southeast Library, where she supports a consortia of regional campus libraries working to improve their outreach and access for online students. She is also a graduate assistant with the MLIS department helping faculty increase digital accessibility in Canvas course materials, to better meet ADA and WCAG 2.2 guidelines. Adrienn completes her MLIS degree this August through IU Indianapolis, graduating with specializations in academic librarianship and archival management. She’s been fortunate to serve as adjunct faculty at University of Rhode Island, Bryant University, Johnson & Wales University, and Cal State Monterey Bay. Previously a professional folklorist with an MFA in creative writing and an MA in historic preservation, she now lives and works in Mystic, Connecticut.

Marc Ross, Head of the Hanley Library and Haskell Memorial Library, University of Pittsburgh-Bradford and Titusville

BREAKOUT SESSION #3: 1:00PM – 2:00PM

H. Continuing progress in projects through changing dynamics in collections management

Abstract: In smaller academic libraries, where staff, time, and resources are limited, it can often feel impossible to develop, implement, or make progress on large collections projects. What started as one pre-migration project has now cascaded over the course of a year into a broader phase of innovation, with new plans and projects for the library. Aligned with the conference theme of renewal, innovation, and change, this session will detail the experience of conducting a comprehensive inventory with student assistance during a time of organizational transformation.

Objectives include: identifying strategies for adapting project plans and timelines to ensure progress continues even when unexpected challenges arise. Recognize approaches for empowering student workers through collections projects by building their confidence and fostering their ability to develop innovative practices. Evaluate their own collections and

student staffing resources to determine how inventory or collections projects could be designed and implemented in their library.

David Fiora is the Electronic Resources Librarian at the Cushwa-Leighton Library of Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana. David's work focuses on all aspects of the technical services, including electronic resource management, systems management, cataloging, and collection development. His research interests are in linked data, Wikidata, digital libraries, and information management.

I. From AI Anxiety to AI Literacy: How One Library Built a Campus-Wide Learning Ecosystem

Abstract: Academic libraries are being asked to respond to generative AI quickly, often amid anxiety, uneven knowledge, and unclear policy. This session describes how one community college library moved from reactive concern to proactive leadership by building a campus-wide AI literacy ecosystem. Participants will learn how library-led programming can connect faculty development, student instruction, classroom guidance, information literacy, and institutional culture change. Objectives include identifying practical starting points for AI literacy work, designing scalable programming across multiple audiences, building campus partnerships, and addressing resistance with clarity and care. Aligned with the conference theme, "The Future of Academic Libraries: Renewal, Innovation and Change," the session frames libraries as essential agents of renewal: not merely responding to new technologies, but helping their institutions adapt thoughtfully. It presents academic libraries as humane, innovative, and steady leaders in moments of rapid change, supporting critical thinking, accessibility, and organizational confidence.

Dawn Zimmerer is Administrative Librarian at the Mclendon Library on the Raymond Campus of Hinds Community College, where she leads initiatives at the intersection of libraries, teaching, and artificial intelligence. She holds a master's degree in library science from Southern Connecticut State University and previously worked at the New York Public Library. At Hinds, Dawn has developed AI literacy programming, faculty workshops, and campus learning opportunities that position the academic library as a hub for practical, ethical, and creative AI engagement. Her work focuses on helping students, faculty, and staff build confidence with emerging technologies while strengthening research, instruction, and information literacy. Dawn has served in leadership and service roles with the American Library Association and the Mississippi Library Association, including work connected to inclusive literature, social justice, and reader engagement. She regularly presents on AI, librarianship, and student-centered learning, with humor, clarity, and a strong commitment to access.

Naomi Hurtienne Magola is a Reference Librarian at Hinds Community College in Raymond, Mississippi. She holds a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Southern Mississippi and has worked in public, school, and academic libraries. At Hinds, she has been actively involved in supporting faculty and staff as they explore generative AI, with a focus on ethical, effective, and practical use in educational settings. Her work reflects a strong interest in helping educators build confidence with emerging technologies while staying grounded in responsible practice. Outside of work, she enjoys audiobooks, crocheting, and spending time with her cats.

J. The CT OER Coordinating Council: Working to Make Higher Education More Open & Affordable

Abstract: As free and no-cost alternatives to traditional textbooks, Open Educational Resources (OER) make learning a more open and affordable experience for students. In Connecticut, statewide efforts to advance OER are led by the CT OER Coordinating Council. Formed in 2019, this council includes members working in a variety of roles across a variety of CT institutions. This membership collaborates to administer a grant program, provide professional development opportunities, survey CT colleges and universities, and carry out special initiatives. This presentation will discuss the history of the council, its funding situation, current initiatives, and plans for the future.

Patrick Carr has served as Chair of the CT OER Coordinating Council since 2023 and Program Manager for CSCU Library Consortium Operations since 2019. He previously worked in the libraries of the University of Connecticut, East Carolina University, and Mississippi State University.

K. When Faculty Go Quiet: Collection Development Through Web Scraping

Abstract: An evidence-based approach toward collection development in academic libraries often depends on integrating faculty feedback, analyzing usage data, and serving the accreditation needs of degree programs. This inclusive method for sustaining the collection becomes fragile when faculty engagement weakens.

This presentation explores how web scraping and basic natural language processing support collection development and reveal new patterns in research. Using the Art Therapy program at Albertus Magnus College as a case study, this session demystifies the workflow of identifying, extracting, and aggregating bibliographic data for analysis from two subject-area journals published by Taylor & Francis.

Keeping with the conference's themes of change and innovation, this session offers a gentle introduction to collection development via responsible web scraping. Attendees will gain new awareness of a data-rich approach to evidence-based collection development, including better ways for identifying gaps, tracking research trends, and supporting emerging academic programs.

Mat Sheehan holds an MS in Library Science from Simmons University and an MSc in Intellectual History from the University of Edinburgh. He has a background in collections, programming languages, licensing, and scholarly communications and currently serves as the Director of Library Services at Goodwin University. Among his interests are coding, Shakespeare, and all things coffee.