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In Review: Academic library outreach: Beyond the campus walls

Courtney, N. (Ed.). (2009). *Academic library outreach: Beyond the campus walls*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. 276 pp. ISBN 978-1591587255. \$45.

Academic Library Outreach is a collection of articles written from the perspective of practitioners, including instruction librarians, archivists, marketing librarians, and special collection librarians. In her introduction, editor Nancy Courtney states that “outreach is not . . . just a service activity but an integral part of the teaching and research mission of the university as well and that engagement is meant to be a two-way street between the university and its community partners” (3). It is the theme of engagement that ties together the five sections of this volume: “K-12 and Information Literacy,” “Public Libraries,” “Special Collections and Digital Projects,” “Events and Exhibits,” and “Discipline-Specific Outreach.”

The one weakness of this book *is* that it is an edited collection of individual articles. As a result, some essential issues are overlooked or not discussed fully. In particular, the efficacy, appropriateness, and difficulties of providing outreach to K-12 students are not adequately treated. Outreach to public libraries receives a small amount of consideration, with only two articles in the section. As the book is organized into sections by type of library or library service (archives, special collections, reference and instruction, etc.) without segue, the differing missions and operations of these libraries and library units and their impact on the practice of outreach are not fully explored. Additionally, the articles are concerned primarily with *public* institutions; how private institutions provide similar services could have been an interesting and informative addition.

The institutions represented in this collection were challenged by the service needs particular to the institution, its surrounding community, and its patron base. In each example, librarians devised creative solutions to meet those particular needs; the record of their experiences, outcomes, and assessments is a valuable tool for any librarian or group of librarians considering the implementation of an outreach program. The following samples highlight the varied experiences described in this book and the solid information they provide on the practical aspects of creating

outreach programs. Florence M. Turcotte's "Outreach in Special Collections Librarianship" would be a worthwhile addition to any introductory course on special collections, as it provides a concise exploration of the role of special collections in providing services to their core patron base as well as to non-institutional stakeholders. Thembi Hadebe, Robin Kear, and Paula M. Smith write honestly about the process of creating a program that went well beyond their institution's borders in order to connect with students and faculty at a school in South Africa. "Working Together: E-we:mcikta: The Arizona State Museum Library and the Tohono O'odham Nation" is a perfect starting place for a discussion of the role of publicly funded special collections in the repatriation of items under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPA) of 1990, as well as the type of comprehensive and content-rich services that can be provided when public institutions and sovereign native tribes work together. And Paula G. Raimondo, Anna Tatro and Alexa Mayo provide a glimpse of how an academic library can assist the community that surrounds it in "Health Information Outreach to Underserved Populations in Baltimore, Maryland."

For many academic librarians, the thought of providing services to populations beyond their core constituency can be daunting. These articles provide a basic framework from which to begin planning outreach programs. To this end, *Academic Library Outreach* also provides references to other materials and publications that can be useful, including a selected, annotated bibliography compiled by Deidra N. Herring. A list of possible funding sources would have been a useful addition to the materials in this volume, as external funding was crucial for almost all of the outreach programs described.

While the situation for providing outreach services differs from institution to institution, the knowledge that exists in a community of like-minded individuals, with experiences to be mined, can provide enough impetus to begin such worthwhile endeavors. *Academic Library Outreach* provides such a community.

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