

Review of: *Leading together: Academic library consortia and advocacy*

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Abstract: Review of Herold, I. M. H. (2021). *Leading together: Academic library consortia and advocacy*. Association of College and Research Libraries.

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Herold's compulsively readable text outlines how library consortia can work together to create meaningful advocacy for their constituents to access a wide variety of resources. This text provides a historical discussion of library consortia to include the traditional roles of various consortia and the services they offer to their members. For example, it was impressive to see that in 1972, the most predominant consortial services were reciprocal borrowing (ILL), cooperative cataloging, and photocopying services (Herold, 2021, p. 10-11). Of course, with the advent of electronic resources, the top services provided have changed, but as we know, the more things change, the more they remain the same.

Herold quoted Allen and Hirshon (1997) when they pointed out that "...consortia need to be more than a buying club; they need to deliver critical tools for new ways of conceiving and delivering services, become "super-libraries," and provide the value and support the success of the member institutions in a 'digital future.' (p. 17). Herold provides a roadmap for how consortia can become super-libraries through an increased focus on advocacy. There are three specific research questions: if IFLA and ALA have outlined a specific advocacy plan for academic libraries, if ALA has any specific plans for academic library consortia advocacy, and how can multiple academic consortia become unified for advocacy? (2021, p. 32-33). Academic library consortia and their role in advocacy for their constituents have not previously been an area of focus for researchers. Herold establishes that marketing does not equal advocacy within the sphere of consortial advocacy. There are two major advocacy-centric theoretical frameworks, the Advocacy Coalition Framework and the Theoretical Framework for Leadership and Advocacy (Herold, 2021, p. 40-44). There is also a thorough discussion of Kotter's framework of leading change within the context of the Advocacy Coalition Framework. Herold also discusses the methods used to sample the academic library consortia members, snowball sampling, or

convenience non-probability sampling. Herold states, “an advantage of snowball sampling is the referral chain process, which allows a researcher to discover and reach populations and characteristics they were not aware existed. This method is cheap, simple, and does not require institutional research approval” (2021, p. 47).

After this introductory information, the bulk of the text focuses on the landscape of academic consortial advocacy, the development of the advocacy plan, and the execution of a workshop for academic library consortial advocacy. Herold studies the landscape of academic library consortial advocacy through detailed studies of the Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA), the Oregon Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) chapter, the Illinois Library Association (ILA), the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), and the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC). Of particular interest is the fact that GWLA allows for meta-advocacy. Herold states, “...the consortium brings together member institutions to work on the change versus the consortium on its own working to create the change “(2021, p. 63). Change, especially in a profession that might not often seem forward-looking, should be intentional and, in this case, with the ultimate goal of advocating for academic libraries and our communities.

SPARC, or the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition, has a simple but effective strategy for advocacy, including the following steps “1. advocating for policies that enable open practices throughout research and education, 2. educating stakeholders on opportunities to retain and regain control of scholarship to serve the public interest; and 3. incubating projects that promote new models for research and education that directly support the needs of scholars and society” (Herold, 2021, p. 61). Of particular interest is the notion of incubating projects, as this allows for fostering creativity and passing these initiatives on for the benefit of our communities.

Herold establishes, “with evidence of sporadic advocacy activity in United States academic library consortia, there is a demonstrated need for a how-to workshop to guide a consortium in creating an intentional plan for advocacy work” (2021, p. 79). The remaining portion of this work is a case study and outline of a workshop plan for a multiday academic library advocacy workshop. With the addition of this workshop outline, library consortia can easily create advocacy plans and seminars for their constituents. While it seems like Herold conducted the advocacy workshop in person before the COVID-19 pandemic, this workshop format could lend itself to a virtual format. Workshop facilitators could easily record this seminar for repeated (or future) viewing by partners.

Advocacy work is essential for academic library consortia. Herold outlines that “advocacy work is a process because it aims for transformational change via influence and persuasion. The success of a plan needs to be considered holistically. The goal is not to win or lose but rather a measure of what was gained. How the consortium builds upon that gain for the next gain is the essential point” (2021, p. 113). Herold also points out that this text was not a comprehensive research study. Herold’s text could serve as a starting point for future research studies of academic library consortia.