

Review of *The Changing Academic Library: Operations, Culture, Environments*

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Abstract:

Review of Budd, J. M. (2018). *The changing academic library: Operations, culture, environments*. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries.

Keywords: *academic libraries, library organizations*



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Academic libraries were once a rather static and fixed unit within higher education; however, in our current climate of changing student demographics, technology, and funding sources, the library must evolve and change according to the shifting nature of higher education as a whole. John M. Budd explores a brief history of academic libraries, while keeping an eye on the future and explaining, “complexity shows no sign of slowing down.” Budd addresses challenges to higher education and the role of the library to its parent institution in these times of seemingly constant flux. Evolution of higher education also contributes to the ways in which libraries operate, provide access to information, and utilize funding.

Budd, professor emeritus in the School of Information Science & Learning Technologies at the University of Missouri, utilizes his expertise to organize the content into twelve chapters. The first three chapters include an introduction with a brief historical overview, and address the structure, governance, and culture of higher educational institutions of various types. Each higher educational institution shares similarities, yet each has a unique vision and focused mission; a community college has a much more narrow and applied mission than does a university. The author explores organizational theory in this section, as a means of elucidating the nature of various institutions. Administrators, faculty, and other groups within academia have the authority and power to influence the culture of a particular college or university. Budd cautions that with various subcultures and values, “there may be some discord and even dysfunction.” Closely connected to organizational culture, the governance of an institution must be outlined in order to fully understand the decision making process related to both finance and policy. Knowing the “chain of authority” will clarify which office, unit, etc. is responsible for various decisions, and how such determinations affect and direct finances.

Budd devotes the second segment of the text toward the library as an organizational unit, management characteristics, as well as operating standards and structure with regard to the type of institution, such as: university, community college, etc. This section includes contextual information on funding and financial resources for the academic library. Because the library is affected by and dependent upon its governing institutional resources, the text also focuses on how the government and economy impacts financial resources and allocations which are funnelled through the parent institution and eventually down to the library itself. Many colleges and universities are now being evaluated on graduation rates, which will determine funding. Budd urges libraries to reevaluate contributions to the academic mission; supporting undergraduate needs could turn the tide for graduation rates. With this consideration, libraries then must examine how it allocates funds to resources, and determine which should take priority. This is no easy task given the competition for funds and resources, budget cuts, and the rising cost of electronic materials.

The third and last section of the book address the publishing environment, digital content and access, the librarian's role in the changing climate, and what the future holds for academic libraries. Budd states, "scholarly communication is a system of systems." With this observation, the author explores the intricacies of disciplinary research and publication. Digital and electronic publications are the future for scholarly publication, and libraries have the responsibility of balancing need, cost, and access to these resources. For both university presses and commercial publishers, the print medium has slowly declined over the decades. While digital materials are on the rise, so is the cost for such materials; maintaining software and access requires financial support. This poses challenges for the institution with regards to research, as external funding is often necessary to accomplish this research and publication mission.

In addition, libraries are faced with balancing print collections for certain disciplines and students, while offering digital resources that increase in cost each year. Space is also a major dilemma for many academic libraries, as they must decide between permanent removal or off-site storage; the latter retains materials but comes with another cost in terms of the storage facility. In an age of declining library budgets, collection development is also negatively impacted. Difficult decisions must be made in terms of which resources the library has funds to retain. This in turn, affects various academic and teaching departments. Discovery services provided by vendors can greatly enhance user experience and locating resources; however, this too has a rising cost. Many libraries are exploring Open Access (OA) content for students and faculty in order to reduce costs. While free content has benefits it also poses several threats. Open access textbooks compete and may take revenue from university bookstores. Many faculty are hesitant to submit research to OA journals because of institutional guidelines related to tenure and promotion, and negative perceptions about the quality of OA journals. To compound this issue, libraries wishing to offer institutional repositories for scholarly works face costs to maintain this digital medium and content, as well as the personnel needed to operate it.

Libraries must also address the needs of diverse student populations. The notion of traditional students is no longer accurate at many institutions, and libraries must make a concerted effort to provide for the unique needs of its varied student body. Budd explores the challenges of the changing student population as well as the move toward distance education and the libraries role in the virtual classroom. This complex environment of digital content and online courses poses many obstacles for librarians to offer information literacy instruction. Budd notes the conflict that many Library and Information Sciences (LIS) students face; the growing need for knowledge in technical aspects often

pushes theoretical knowledge in the field to the background. The emphasis on technology must also be balanced with personal connections and faculty relationships in order to offer more concerted support services. Library administration faces its own obstacles; the library mission and vision must fit with that of the university or higher administration and conflict with professional standards for mission and vision. Compounding this issue is that of librarians and faculty status. Such status requires evidence of scholarship, which is often directly compared with teaching faculty and does not always take into account the difference in responsibilities and roles. Finally, Budd touches on the digital and online nature of libraries within the institution. Libraries will become more entrenched in digital content and the ethical responses to such resources. Library roles and services will continue to evolve due to changes in higher education and the dynamic nature of information content.

The Changing Academic Library is a text well suited to LIS students and beginning academic librarians, who must learn the role of academic libraries within institutions of higher education. Understanding the organization and structure of higher education and the challenges presented to both the parent organization and the library will enable the reader to have a holistic view of the academic library. Researchers interested in academic libraries may find valuable information in Budd's work, as it provides an in-depth look at library roles, services, and challenges in the digital age. Teaching faculty may also find this text valuable in terms of gaining detailed insight into the financial challenges faced by many academic libraries related to collection development, budgetary concerns, and responsibilities to higher administration of the institution. Librarians wishing to make a career move from another type of library will benefit from Budd's work, as it sketches a detailed view of academic librarianship in relation to the organization structure and governance of a parent institution. Budd thoroughly examines all facets of the academic library offering insight into the functions of

libraries within higher education, as well as the dynamics between governing bodies, institutions, and academic libraries. This text is a well charted guide to navigating libraries in the academic environment.