



# 2024 Annual Report

## A Year for Reflection, Rethinking, Rededication

ASERL spent much of the 2023-24 program year engaged in conversations with our members about our foundational documents. This included a thorough review and revision of our bylaws, membership criteria, mission, and values statements - some of which had not seen significant revision in 20+ years.

- A review of ASERL's bylaws removed redundancies and contradictions, updated sections that no longer meet current practices, and corrected grammatical issues.
- Updates to ASERL's mission and values statements reflect many hours of conversation among ASERL library leaders to ensure these documents represent what ASERL is, our aspirations for the future, and how we operate.

Revising ASERL's membership criteria was a formidable process of reflecting on what makes a library a "research library." After much exploration and reflection, a simple answer emerged: A research library supports a research institution.

- ASERL selected the two categories created by the Carnegie Classification System to identify research institutions - R1 and R2 - as a part of our new criteria for evaluating prospective members.
- Additionally, ASERL selected the threshold defined by the Center for Measuring University Performance (CMUP) for "Great Research Universities" as another requirement, which currently requires a university to expend a minimum of \$40 million annually on research activities funding to fulfill this designation.

Using data from independent outside organizations like Carnegie and CMUP helps to remove opportunities for bias. With these changes, we hope that doors that had long been closed are now opened to a larger array of libraries that serve the American research ecosystem. We look forward to welcoming new members in the years ahead.

## Welcome, Monarch Nation!



At their 2024 Annual Meeting, ASERL member representatives voted unanimously to admit Old Dominion University (ODU) as the newest member of the association, bringing membership to a total of 39 institutional members in 12 states. "The excellent people at Old Dominion University prepared a very compelling application to join the ASERL community," commented Jeff Steely, ASERL's Board President and Dean of Libraries at Georgia State University. "We are very pleased to count them among our ranks and look forward to years of mutually beneficial collaborations."

Timothy Hackman, Dean of Libraries at Old Dominion, added, "The librarians and staff of the ODU Libraries are beyond thrilled to join the wonderful institutions of ASERL and to collaborate with our new colleagues to continue developing innovative collections, services, and expertise."

## Exploring Ways to Expand ASERL Resource Sharing

As members of our regional resource sharing program, ASERL libraries benefit from access to much of the 150 million items they collectively hold. This year, ASERL was fortunate to recruit Courtney Taulbee, Head of ILL / Document Delivery at the University of Kentucky, to serve as Visiting Program Officer for Expanded Resource Sharing. Courtney discovered that no single solution to resolving systems conflicts has emerged, though a number of promising projects are working toward connecting these tools. We are working toward broader adoption of the most recent ISO standard for resource sharing and investigating the potential for other peer-to-peer sharing.

ASERL is extremely grateful to Courtney Taulbee for her work as VPO, and the larger community for continuing this work into the year ahead.

# Additional Highlights

## ASERL's Impact

**45** webinars and other online sessions

**108** future library leaders served via in-person workshops

**9,722** people served via ASERL online programming

**84K+** ILL transactions among ASERL libraries

**\$384K+** saved by ASERL libraries from member discounts



## Leadership Development Workshops Continue, Expand

This year, ASERL focused on expanding our Leadership Development Retreats and strengthening national collaborations.

In Spring 2024, ASERL collaborated with the Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN) on the most recent Leadership Development retreat. Held April 17-19 for nearly 50 attendees - our biggest group to date - sessions focused on leadership development, building trust in the workplace, equity and maker spaces, and building regional connections. Participants were also excited to visit the North Carolina Central campus, as well as tours of the ASERL member institutions (Duke University, North Carolina State University, and UNC Chapel Hill). In just over a year, more than 100 people have participated in our Leadership Development workshops, a wonderful new cohort and community that stays connected via an ongoing series of online programming.

Additionally, ASERL was a leading partner in developing a successful IMLS grant proposal for a new leadership curriculum for BIPOC library staff. ASERL is among ten regional library consortia that will partner over the next two years to develop and pilot BLASS, a new leadership curriculum to cultivate leadership competencies and career planning skills.

## “Risky Business” Provides Forum for Curators to Discuss Unique Challenges



In August 2023, ASERL hosted 50 curators and special collections librarians for a unique unconference. Held at Emory University, “Risky Business” was a two-day event that allowed people who work with highly specialized collections and the

donors who contribute those materials to our libraries to confer about issues endemic to such work. Holly Smith, College Archivist at Spelman College, started the event with an invigorating keynote on employing radical empathy in memory work practices. Attendees shared concerns and ideas for handling potentially sensitive subjects, such as responsibly providing access to offensive or otherwise historically problematic content, and creating productive working relationships with donors who have unrealistic expectations and demands for their donations.

With the success of the 2023 event, the Special Collections Interest Group is preparing a second unconference in 2025.



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