

*Public Libraries' Responses to Censorship: Analyzing the Implementation and Effects of Standard Practices*  
Shannon M. Oltmann (University of Kentucky) and Emily J. M. Knox (University of Illinois)

### **Introduction:**

This National Leadership Applied Research proposal addresses the IMLS strategic goal of **building the capacity of libraries to improve community well-being** by focusing on *Objective 2.3*: “Establish or refine approaches that equip libraries and archives to contribute to the well-being of communities.” There is a need to know *how* public libraries are responding to the increase in book challenges and bans of the past two years—whether library materials are being removed from shelves, how libraries explain their actions to their communities, and whether the standard, suggested practices are being followed.

The lead organization is the University of Kentucky (PI Shannon M. Oltmann), partnering with the University of Illinois (Co-PI Emily J.M. Knox). The total award sought is **\$449,118 over three years with no cost sharing**. The proposed work will impact how public libraries respond to materials challenges, which affects the materials that are available for their communities, particularly traditionally marginalized groups. This is highly relevant to public libraries currently, which are facing escalating challenges nationwide.

### **Project Justification:**

The rate of challenges to books and other library materials has escalated sharply from 2021-present [1, 2]. Challenges come from parents, grandparents, and even local and state elected officials [3, 4, 5]; most challenges occur in school and public libraries [3]. These challenges have occurred nationwide, in all 50 states. Challenges in the past two years have primarily focused on books with authors, themes, or protagonists who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC) and/or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) [2, 3, 4]. The American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom (ALA OIF) has developed standard practices or benchmarks for libraries to follow when faced with a materials challenge. These practices include: have an existing reconsideration policy; require a form to be completed for each individual item challenged; create a committee to consider the challenge; ask the committee to consider the item in its entirety as well as relevant professional reviews; share the committee’s decision; formulate an appeals process; and keep the item in the collection while it is being challenged [6, 7]. These benchmarks have been implicitly positioned as standard or “best” practices in the field (for example, by being taught in library science programs); nonetheless, in this project, we explicitly acknowledge that they may not, in fact, be the best or most common ways for libraries to respond to challenges.

Despite a rise in the number of challenges, the tireless labor of OIF workers, and an increase in relevant media coverage, there has been *no* systematic study of whether public libraries are following these standard practices when faced with a challenge. There are many media reports of libraries not following these practices [8, 9, 10], but we do not know the proportion of libraries doing so. Further, we do not know the impacts on communities of following—or not following—ALA OIF suggested practices. Are library directors aware of ALA OIF standard practices? What do directors think of these practices? How (if at all) do they implement—or not implement—the practices? What are the implications and results of using—or not using—these practices? Future work may involve other stakeholders, such as library boards of trustees, volunteers, parents, school board members, patrons, students, and challengers. Currently, we feel that many of these voices are represented in news media, but **a detailed examination of the various ways that libraries can and do respond to challenges is lacking**. Thus, this project focuses on libraries/ library directors, with the acknowledgement that other stakeholder voices may be worth collecting in another project. Our focus here is on the *ways libraries do and do not respond to challenges*, rather than the reasons behind the challenges. Additionally, work on library board policies, practices, roles, and statements, while important, is outside the scope of our current proposal.

In addition, this project will yield both information about current responses to challenges *and* suggested revisions to the standard practices. Our data and analysis from this project will not only shed light on current practices but help illuminate guidance that would be more helpful for libraries. In particular, we plan to emphasize proactive steps for public libraries.

### **Research Questions and Theoretical Framework:**

This project aims to address the following research questions:

- Do public library directors know what the OIF suggested practices are? Does knowledge vary depending on demographic factors of libraries or library directors (e.g., location, degree, age, experience)?
- When library materials are challenged, how often are OIF standard practices followed, and to what extent are they followed?
- What are the impacts of (not) following OIF benchmarks on libraries' communities?
- What actions (with respect to book challenges) best serve public libraries' communities? Does this differ based on community composition?
- How can the standard practices be revised to better guide libraries and emphasize proactive approaches?

Theoretically, we will adapt *knowledge translation* (KT) from the health/ medical field [11, 12]. KT “refers to the synthesis, exchange, dissemination, and ethically sound application of knowledge” [14]. KT particularly focuses on the translation of knowledge from research into practice (and the dialogue therein) [13, 14], acknowledging that KT “occurs in a complex social system of interactions among stakeholders” [13]. Here, we are examining KT from ALA OIF to public libraries across the U.S. A paper by Graham et al. (2006), which has been cited over 4,700 times, proposed a **knowledge-to-action** model that encompasses a cycle of action steps that occur in/for KT: identify the problem; adapt knowledge to the local context; assess barriers to knowledge use; select, tailor, and implement interventions; monitor knowledge use; evaluate outcomes; and sustain knowledge use [13]. These steps describe how knowledge is translated into action.

We anticipate adapting this model for library science, to better analyze the transfer of knowledge (or lack thereof) from ALA OIF to local public libraries (and back to OIF). For example, what is the problem that OIF standard practices attempt to solve? How can OIF-recommended practices be adapted to local contexts? What are the barriers to local libraries adopting and utilizing these practices? How can the standard practices be tailored and implemented in public libraries? How can we best monitor the uptake and utilization of these practices? What are the outcomes when libraries use (or don't use) these practices? How can OIF and/or the library community sustain the use of benchmarks to reduce challenges and their impacts on communities? These questions map onto the action steps listed above and illustrate how we can adapt the KT cycle for the library realm.

### **Methods:**

In this project, we will use three methods: collecting data from existing records (stage one); interviewing library directors (stage two); and surveying library directors nationally (stage three). The two PIs have extensive experience with each method. See the Project Work Plan below for more details of the data collection and for how we will make this data both available and secure.

### **Project Work Plan:**

This proposal has four stages. The **first stage** has two parts: background data collection and preparation of the interview protocol. We will gather data about challenges to public library materials that occurred from January 2021 through June 2023; our primary sources will be the compilation of challenges from OIF and the *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy* (the PI is past editor of this journal and the other researcher is the current editor), supplemented by news media stories and reports from PEN America and EveryLibrary. In addition, we will ask the Advisory Board (see below) for suggestions on finding additional data. We anticipate hundreds of libraries will be included in this data set, which will consist of public libraries that have faced challenges; we will use this data in the second stage of the research.

Libraries that are and are not affiliated with ALA will be included in this data set and in all subsequent stages of the research. The goal is not to limit the data by ALA affiliation or ALA standard practices, but to incorporate as

many diverse perspectives (including non-ALA viewpoints) as possible (thus, the non-representativeness of ALA's membership is not relevant). Similarly, we will include library directors who do and do not have a master's degree in library science. We may find interesting differences between degreed and non-degreed librarians, or between ALA-affiliated and non-affiliated libraries. Other than using some data collected by ALA OIF, and having an OIF staff person on the Advisory Board (see below), we will purposefully not involve OIF in the research plan or execution. We anticipate that many libraries are deviating (or have or will deviate) from the standard practices suggested by OIF for various reasons, and we want these librarians to be frank and open in describing their actions. For example, if public libraries are quietly removing items from their collections, they may not feel comfortable admitting this if the project explicitly and publicly collaborates with OIF. We intend to capture the full spectrum of possible ways that libraries can respond to challenges. Thus, we will use OIF's recommended benchmarks as *one* framework of how libraries may respond, rather than being prescriptive or judgmental. (We will not refer to OIF's recommendations as "best practices" within the interview or survey, for example.) Further, we may even determine that these standard practices are not, actually, the most appropriate practices for libraries to follow when faced with a challenge.

Also in the first stage, we will develop the interview protocol, including securing Institutional Review Board (IRB) ethical approval. We will design the interview questions based on the data we uncover in stage one and with guidance from the Advisory Board, and we will secure the appropriate IRB approval before beginning interviewing. We emphasize that we will explicitly build in safeguards for interviewees' confidentiality by, for example, not using Zoom (which could record metadata and video) and not asking interviewees to state their name or library name on recordings; furthermore, we will only record interviews with respondents' permission. We will use the Advisory Board's expertise to develop the interview questions and validate the guide. For example, we might ask if books other than those publicly reported were challenged; how long it took to respond to the challenge(s); the steps the director took in responding to the challenge(s); what role, if any, social media or other media played; how the community reacted to the challenge; and how satisfied the directors are with the outcome. Again, to allow our interviewees space to feel unconstrained and comfortable being honest, we will not explicitly invoke OIF guidelines—rather, we want to see to what extent (if any) they are mentioned or described by our respondents.

We anticipate this first stage lasting eight months and producing at least one publication to be shared with the library community. Thus, we anticipate sharing initial data with libraries within the first year. Throughout the project, we will conduct **quarterly webinars** to share our findings and solicit input from practitioners. We want to keep the library community informed of this project and to be invested in its work. We will distribute information about the webinars via relevant listservs and social media.

In the **second stage**, we will contact the library directors who have faced challenges in 2021-2023 (drawn from the data collected in the first stage) and request interviews. (Again, this stage will include libraries that are and are not affiliated with ALA; in fact, we anticipate some respondents will be critical of ALA OIF.) The interviews will be qualitative and semi-structured, using a standard interview guide. We will conduct up to 40 interviews (or until saturation), ensuring respondents vary by geography and size of library. In this stage, we focus on library directors because they are likely to have the most knowledge about how their institution has responded to challenges. We will record (with permission), transcribe, and analyze these interviews for key themes and findings, using an iterative, team-based coding approach. Data we anticipate collecting includes:

- How libraries responded to challenges
- How challenges affected the library director, staff, and their relationships to their community
- Problems or difficulties encountered when responding to challenges
- Commonalities across challenged books
- Outcomes of challenges (often not reported in media)
- Longer-term implications of challenges in the community

We will share these findings with our Advisory Board to help put our findings in perspective and authenticate the results. We anticipate this stage lasting one year (because conducting and analyzing interviews can be more time-consuming than surveys) and producing at least one publication and one presentation to the library community. Again, we will conduct quarterly webinars to share our progress and results.

In the **third stage**, we will create a survey based on the key themes and findings from the interviews, again with the assistance of our Advisory Board. (We will not be prescriptive about ALA OIF involvement or recommended practices; rather, we want to know the full spectrum of library responses.) We will have both closed and open-ended questions in the survey, and it will be created using Qualtrics software. We will obtain IRB approval for the survey before sending it out and will ensure confidentiality for our respondents by not collecting sensitive information, including IP addresses. Topics/questions we may ask include:

- Has your library taken any proactive steps, before a book challenge occurred? If so, what were they?
- Have you had any books challenged by community members in the past five years? Which books?
- How did the challenge take place?
- Was media (or social media) involved?
- In what ways did your library respond?
- What steps did your library take to respond to the challenge?
- What was the outcome of the challenge? (Was the book removed, relocated, redacted, or restricted in some way?)
- Did the challenge affect your library's relationship with the community? In what ways?
- Has your library changed the way it orders books? Or any other practices, since the challenge?

Using guidance from the University of Kentucky statistician, we will distribute the survey to approximately 1500 library directors across the United States. We will distribute this survey nationwide to gain a representative sample. Because some libraries do not report challenges publicly, we expand beyond the data set from the first stage, to capture a wider range of experiences and perspectives. We will collect and analyze this quantitative survey data with the assistance of the UK statistician and use our Advisory Board to reflect on and substantiate our findings. We anticipate this stage will last eight months and will result in at least one publication and one presentation. Again, we will produce quarterly webinars to share our findings and solicit feedback.

In the **fourth and final stage**, we will develop updated guidelines for public libraries, that include both proactive (steps to take before a challenge) and reactive (steps to take once a challenge is initiated) elements. We anticipate our Advisory Board being significantly involved in this step, to help us determine appropriate steps, effective wording and structure, and dissemination plans. Most of the current OIF guidelines are focused on policy development and responding to challenges, but we anticipate uncovering other steps and ideas that libraries can undertake, especially in a more proactive manner to engage their communities and boards of trustees and hopefully forestall future challenges. We anticipate working with ALA OIF to update and improve their suggested practices, based on what libraries are actually doing and the steps that they report are most effective. These guidelines will be shared nationally through state library associations, email listservs, conferences, and with the assistance of our Advisory Board. Finally, we will also host (and record for later distribution) a webinar/online training that describes proactive steps; that explains the guidelines; that emphasizes the need for defending intellectual freedom; and that encourages libraries to adopt the guidelines in their responses. We anticipate that the guidelines and webinar will help public libraries better defend their collections and serve their communities. As challenges are occurring across the U.S., this will have a national impact on libraries and their communities. This stage will last eight months and will result in updated guidelines and a recorded training webinar on our research site.

#### **Diversity Plan:**

One PI is a member of the LGBTQ+ community and the other researcher is a member of the BIPOC community. In addition, our **Advisory Board** will include members who are BIPOC/LGBTQ+ and/or who have particular expertise in reaching and serving these communities. We will particularly reach out to traditionally marginalized communities through groups such as REFORMA, the Black Caucus of ALA, the Asian Pacific American Librarians Association, and the ALA Rainbow Round Table to disseminate our interview request, our survey, and our findings. This Advisory Board will also help us design our interview guide and survey, as well as validate the results of both. We anticipate virtually meeting 2-3 times per year with the board. The ten members will each receive \$100/year for three years. The following individuals have already agreed to serve on the Advisory Board:

Name	Position	Relevant Expertise
Eric Stroshane	Interim Program Manager for Challenge Support and Publications, Office for Intellectual Freedom	Collects and responds to challenges across the U.S.
Monica Colon-Aguirre	Assistant Professor, School of Information Science, University of South Carolina	REFORMA member, skilled in library research
Jennifer Coffey Griswold	Director, Pflugerville (TX) Public Library	Public library director
Shauntee Burns-Simpson	Associate Director, Center for Educators and Schools, New York (NY) Public Library	BCALA member
Deb Sica	Deputy County Librarian, Alameda County (CA) Library	Rainbow Roundtable representative
Jin Jan	Children's Librarian, Mandel Public Library (FL)	APALA representative
Theresa Chmara	Lawyer; General Counsel for Freedom to Read Foundation	Lawyer specializing in First Amendment and censorship issues
John Chrastka	Executive Director, EveryLibrary	Expert in public library advocacy and support
Jenny Bossaller	Associate Professor, School of Information Science & Learning Technologies, University of Missouri	Skilled in library research
Tamela Chambers	Librarian IV, Branch Manager, Chicago Public Library-Beverly Branch	BCALA member

**Project Results:**

Each stage of the project will generate data which will be shared in the following ways: both academic and professional trade publications (such as *American Libraries* and *Public Libraries*) with national impact and presentations at conferences such as the American Library Association, the Public Library Association Conference, the conference for the Association for Rural and Small Libraries, and state library conferences. We will also make the **anonymized survey data** available online (via University of Illinois' Illinois Data Bank service; see Data Management Plan for more details). We will work with ALA OIF to update and improve the recommended practices, based on what libraries are actually doing and the steps that they report are most effective. This will include special attention to *proactive* steps that libraries can take. These guidelines will be shared nationally through state library associations, email listservs, and conferences. Each quarter during our project, we will host a webinar designed to provide updates on our project, share initial findings, and solicit input

from the library community. Finally, we will also host (and record for later distribution) a webinar/online training that explains the guidelines; that emphasizes the need for defending intellectual freedom; and that encourages libraries to adopt the guidelines in their responses. We anticipate that the guidelines and recorded training webinar will help public libraries better defend their collections and serve their communities. As challenges are occurring across the US, this will have a national impact.

## **References**

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**Schedule of Completion**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Project Step</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
One	Background data collection (creating list of public libraries that experienced book challenges between January 2021—June 2023)	August 2023—January 2024
One	Quarterly webinar	December 2023
One	Develop interview protocol and secure IRB approval	February 2024—March 2024
One	Quarterly webinar	March 2024
One	Conduct interviews and collect data	April 2024—July 2024
One	Quarterly webinar	June 2024
One	Transcribe interviews (interviews will be transcribed using software)	July 2024
Two	Analyze interview data (interviews will be analyzed using team-based iterative coding)	August 2024—December 2024
Two	Quarterly webinar	August 2024
Two	Quarterly webinar	December 2024
Two	Disseminate findings from interview stage via presentations and publications	January 2025—March 2025
Two	Quarterly webinar	March 2025
Two	Design survey instrument (in conjunction with statistician) and secure IRB approval	April 2025—May 2025
Two	Distribute survey and collect data	June 2025—July 2025
Two	Quarterly webinar	June 2025
Three	Analyze survey data (with aid of statistician)	July 2025—October 2025
Three	Quarterly webinar	August 2025
Three	Disseminate findings from survey stage via presentations and publications	November 2025—December 2025
Three	Quarterly webinar	December 2025
Three	Develop updated guidelines for libraries when responding to challenges	January 2026—March 2026
Three	Quarterly webinar	March 2026
Three	Disseminate updated guidelines via webinar, presentations, and publications	April 2026—May 2026
Three	Reflect on project and wrap up	June 2026—July 2026

## **Digital Products Plan**

### **Type: What digital products will you create?**

Digital products developed from this project will include the following:

- a) anonymized survey responses (approximately 1500 responses, in excel format)
- b) updated guidelines for libraries (one set of guidelines, as a word document)
- c) quarterly webinars (10-12 webinars, as an mp4)
- d) webinar/training about the updated guidelines (one webinar, as an mp4)
- e) multiple presentations and publications (several presentations and publications in various formats)

### **Availability: How will you make your digital products openly available?**

We anticipate making this data available to the public through three venues. First, the anonymized survey data will be stored and managed through Illinois Data Bank, the University of Illinois' research data repository (<https://databank.illinois.edu/>). See Data Management Plan for more details about this management of data. We will ensure the data from respondents is anonymized. Second, datasets B-E listed above will be stored on our research website (<https://mappinginfoaccess.org>), as they are created and publishable. Quarterly webinars, as well as the final cumulative webinar, will be hosted on our website. We will host presentations and publications, pending permission from the organizer/publisher. Everything on our website will be anonymized and openly available. Third, the updated guidelines for libraries (B) will be stored in IDEALS, the Illinois digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship, which collects, disseminates, and provides persistent and reliable access to the research and scholarship of people at the University of Illinois.

### **Access: What rights will you assert over your digital products, and what limitations, if any, will you place on their use? Will your products implicate privacy concerns or cultural sensitivities, and if so, how will you address them?**

We will assert a Creative Commons license, CC-BY. This allows people to distribute and build upon the work in any format, as long as attribution is given to the creator(s). Our products will be available online for others to utilize and analyze. Some of our work (the interview and survey data) does implicate privacy concerns. Thus, we will not host the interview data publicly, to protect respondents' confidentiality. For the survey data, we will remove all identifying information (such as individual names, library names, or geographical locations) before sending it to the Illinois Data Bank.

### **Sustainability: How will you address the sustainability of your digital products?**

The Illinois Data Bank has a policy to maintain access to data for at least five years. In addition, we have maintained our research website for over five years and will continue to maintain it as a repository of related data and information. Information posted there will be freely and readily available for use and reuse by libraries, the public, and other interested parties.



## **Data Management Plan**

*Identify the type(s) and estimated amount of data you plan to collect or generate, and the purpose or intended use(s) to which you expect them to be put. Describe the method(s) you will use, the proposed scope and scale, and the approximate dates or intervals at which you will collect or generate data.*

Data generated from this project includes:

- a) Spreadsheet of public libraries that have faced challenges from 2021-2023. This will be generated by collecting data from the *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy*, EveryLibrary, and PEN America. The scope will be nationwide throughout the U.S. Approximate dates for collection are August 2023-January 2024.
- b) Anonymized transcripts of interviews (approximately 40 interviews). This will be generated by conducting qualitative, semi-structured interviews with library directors identified in the spreadsheet (above). The scope will be nationwide. Approximate dates for collection are April 2024-July 2024.
- c) Anonymized survey responses (approximately 1500 responses). This will be generated by disseminating the quantitative survey to potential respondents. The scope will be nationwide. Approximate dates for collection are June 2025-July 2025.

The spreadsheet of libraries will be used to help select interview participants for the second stage of the project. The anonymized transcripts of interviews will be used to learn in-depth about libraries' responses to book challenges and to develop the survey for the third stage of the project; we will also create publications/presentations from this data. The anonymized survey responses will be used to assess how libraries respond to challenges and to develop revised guidelines for libraries in the fourth stage of the project; we will also create publications/presentations from this data.

*Will you collect any sensitive information? This may include personally identifiable information (PII), confidential information (e.g., trade secrets), or proprietary information. If so, detail the specific steps you will take to protect the information while you prepare it for public release (e.g., anonymizing individual identifiers, data aggregation). If the data will not be released publicly, explain why the data cannot be shared due to the protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, and other rights or requirements.*

The spreadsheet of libraries will contain publicly available information, including library director names and email addresses. We will redact/remove the personally identifiable information (such as names and email addresses) before making the spreadsheet public. Both the interviews and surveys will be designed to avoid collecting sensitive information—for example, by not asking respondents to state their name, library name, or geographical location. However, we recognize that some personally identifiable information may be included nonetheless, and we will redact/remove that information before analysis or sharing our dataset publicly. When necessary, we will anonymize individual identifiers or apply pseudonyms. We will not share the interview data publicly, to protect respondents' privacy and confidentiality. However, we will share the anonymized survey data via Illinois Data Bank (see below).

*What technical (hardware and/or software) requirements or dependencies would be necessary for understanding retrieving, displaying, processing, or otherwise reusing the data? How can these tools be*

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*accessed (e.g., open-source and freely available, commercially available, available from your research team)?*

The dataset will be stored in the University of Illinois data repository, Illinois Data Bank: <https://databank.illinois.edu/>. This is operated by the Research Data Service of the University Library. In their policy documentation, the Illinois Data Bank states: "The Illinois Data Bank is intended to provide maximum public access to unrestricted research data for the advancement of scholarship and the public good in ways that are consistent with the U.S. President's Office of Science and Technology Policy ("OSTP") Public Access Memo of 2013. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign maintains its commitment to seeing that restricted data are not inappropriately or inadvertently disclosed, consistent with all requirements pertaining to the collection, storage, access, use, transmission, and disposal of sensitive data." The Illinois Data Bank also states: "Datasets published in the Illinois Data Bank are discoverable and openly available to anyone with access to the World Wide Web. Data Files and Metadata Files are provided at least in the original format deposited. When appropriate, items in proprietary formats may be converted to formats that can be opened and read using freely available software." We anticipate depositing the data sets in formats using Microsoft Office (Excel, Word, etc.).

*What documentation (e.g., consent agreements, data documentation, codebooks, metadata, and analytical and procedural information) will you capture or create along with the data? Where will the documentation be stored and in what format(s)? How will you permanently associate and manage the documentation with the data it describes to enable future reuse?*

Our university Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) will likely require consent forms for the interviews and/or surveys. If required, the consent forms will be stored in locked filing cabinets and/or encrypted computer files, as Microsoft Word files. Data stored with the Illinois Data Bank must have appropriate descriptive metadata to facilitate discovery and use. We will collaborate with the Illinois Data Bank staff to develop appropriate metadata for these datasets. The Illinois Data Bank will manage the documentation to enable future reuse.

**University of Kentucky Mission Statement:** The University of Kentucky is a public land grant university dedicated to improving people's lives through excellence in education, research and creative work, service, and health care. As Kentucky's flagship institution of higher education, the University plays a critical leadership role by promoting diversity, inclusion, economic development, and human well-being.

The University of Kentucky:

- Facilitates learning, informed by scholarship and research;
- Expands knowledge through research, scholarship and creative activity; and
- Serves a global community by disseminating, sharing and applying knowledge

The University contributes to the economic development and quality of life within Kentucky's borders and beyond, nurturing a diverse community characterized by fairness and equal opportunity. The mission statement can be found here: <https://pres.uky.edu/strategic-plan> and was adopted October 2021 by the Board of Trustees.

**University of Kentucky:** Established in 1865, the University of Kentucky (UK) is a public land grant university dedicated to improving people's lives through excellence in education, research and creative work, service, and health care. In fall 2020, UK enrolled over 31,000 students on its 784-acre urban campus in Lexington, Kentucky. The University is one of only a small number of U.S. institutions having a major academic medical center with all six health sciences colleges and the full spectrum of academic colleges on a single campus. Students choose from more than 200 majors and degree programs in UK's 16 degree-granting colleges and diverse professional schools. This constellation of programs has enabled UK to develop extraordinarily productive collaborations across diverse disciplines, which collectively contribute to a tradition of excellence in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research. UK has over 80 national rankings for academic and research excellence and is one of 131 private and public universities in the country to be classified as Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity (R1) in 2018 under the Carnegie Classifications. R1 universities represent 3.7% of all institutions in the classification system. UK was also selected for inclusion in the Carnegie 2015 Community Engagement Classification, which recognizes institutions that provide evidence of substantial engagement and contribution to their communities. The designation is the result of a two-year application process and is valid through 2025. UK faculty, staff, and students brought in more than \$467.9 million in new sponsored project awards in FY 2021. Of that total, UK was awarded \$281.2 million in grants and contracts by federal agencies. One of the world's most advanced research university libraries, the William T. Young Library, houses more than 4.6 million volumes (1.1 million electronic books), approximately 71,000 full-text electronic journals, and 450 licensed networked electronic databases.

**College of Communication and Information:** The University of Kentucky (UK) College of Communications and Information includes five units: Department of Communication, Department of Integrated Strategic Communication, School of Journalism and Media, School of Information Science, and Graduate Program in Communication. In 2011, the college became a member of an elite group of 53 North American colleges and universities, as well as peer institutions across Europe and Asia, recognized for their dedication to advancing the information field in the 21st century as an iSchool. iSchools demonstrate substantial sponsored research activity, engagement in the training of future researchers – usually through an active research-oriented doctoral program – and commitment to progress in the information field. More than 80 faculty members are distinguished along several dimensions, including international recognition for research and expertise. Faculty researchers secured more than \$877,000 in new extramural funding in FY 2022.

**School of Information Science:** The School of Information Science (renamed from School of Library and Information Science in 2015) consists of multiple programs: library science, information and communication technologies, information studies, and instructional communication. The School is led by Director Jeff Huber and Assistant Director Will Buntin. With 23 fulltime faculty and several lecturers, the School has received multiple federal grants. The School's governance structure is that the College of Communication and Information is above it, which is governed by the University of Kentucky. The University of Kentucky is the flagship for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, serving its 4.5 million citizens in a variety of ways. The School of Information Science serves the Commonwealth, and its online masters of library science program serves students across the United States.