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Library Consortia Contributing to College Affordability: Collection and OER Initiatives in the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois

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Abstract

Purpose- The Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) consists of one hundred twenty-eight libraries. This article presents an analysis of collection and OER initiatives undertaken by CARLI over the past decade that contribute to improving college affordability.

Design/methodology/approach- After reviewing important literature pertaining to library consortia and college affordability, this article presents a detailed case study of CARLI's collection and OER initiatives.

Findings- Due to their economies of scale, library consortia have the potential to make substantial contributions to improving college affordability.

Originality/value- Compared to the efforts of individual libraries to improve college affordability, library consortium efforts have received far less attention in the professional literature. The work of the CARLI consortium documented here can provide a template for other library consortia that are working to improve college affordability.

Keywords Library Consortia, Affordability, Open Educational Resources, OER, Collaborative Collection Development, Ebooks, Open Textbooks, Demand-Driven Acquisitions, Patron-Driven Acquisitions

Introduction

In a 2018 survey of 6,000 college students, paying for college along with work responsibilities tied for the top challenge to student success (Porter and Umbach, 2019). Ever-increasing college costs contribute directly to poor retention rates, inability to complete college in a

standard timeframe, and poor grades due to inability to afford class materials. For many years, long term trends have pointed to a coming national crisis in higher education. This trend has been driven not only by affordability concerns, but in many areas of the country also by shrinking student populations and reductions in state higher education funding. The COVID-19 pandemic has only accelerated this preexisting crisis. The National Center for Education Statistics notes that between 2007 and 2017, total undergraduate costs at public institutions rose for an inflation adjusted thirty-one percent, and costs for private nonprofit institutions rose twenty-four percent (2020). Record unemployment and the growing economic crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has made college costs insurmountable for some and challenging for others. Clearly, halting this alarming trend and improving college affordability will take a wholescale rethinking of higher education.

Academic library materials' budgets represent a not inconsequential portion of overall college budgets. According to the *2018 ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Annual Survey*, the average baccalaureate library has a materials' budget of five hundred thousand dollars while the average doctoral library has a budget of five million dollars (Elliot, 2020). Controlling, or even reducing, these materials costs while maximizing the quality of collections is a persistent challenge for academic libraries. While individual libraries have long been accustomed to performing detailed collection assessments and strategically negotiating with publishers and vendors, their leverage as single entities is limited. For this reason, many academic libraries belong to one or more library consortia which bring the power of large groups of libraries to bear in creating shared collections and in negotiations with vendors. The level of cooperation of libraries in a given consortia exceeds that exhibited in most other areas of higher education. George Machovec, the Executive Director of the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries, has elaborated on this point: "In a time of economic crisis in higher education, library consortia have brought cooperation to a level that is not seen in most other areas of the academy. Libraries are

working together while their parent institutions compete for students, research dollars and on the athletic field" (2017).

The Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) consists of one hundred twenty-eight Illinois academic libraries that collectively serve over eight hundred thousand students, faculty, and staff. CARLI's 2019 annual value analysis states that CARLI delivered forty-five million dollars in goods and services to members with a return on investment of $3.87 for every dollar spent (CARLI, 2019). This article presents a case study of recent CARLI innovative collection-based initiatives and educational efforts that contribute to improving college affordability. CARLI's governance structure includes advisory committees. One of these, the Collection Management Committee, is charged with "...identify[ing], develop[ing], and encourage[ing] cooperation and collaboration in the development and management of collection in all formats and media...The committee will identify innovations, including efficient and cost effective best practices, for the management of statewide collections" [I]. CARLI's Collection Management Committee had responsibility for supporting the collections initiatives discussed below, including consortial book acquisition projects, various consortial patron-driven acquisition (PDA) models, and collaborative collection development projects. CARLI also negotiates pricing for e-resources and journal packages which obviously contributes to affordability. These activities are outside the scope of this article as vendor negotiations are a common, and well-documented, practice among library consortia.

Brief Literature Review

Library consortia efforts to improve college affordability exist in a rapidly changing landscape of evolving formats and licensing options. Publishers are keenly interested in figuring out the best way to sell or lease electronic content to libraries. Library patrons, on the other hand, expect instant access to online materials and are frustrated when they cannot access content held by other libraries in their consortium as they can with print books. Library consortia serve a

mediating role between publisher and patrons. Due to the rate of change in this area, this literature review does not attempt to be comprehensive; opting instead to only include important scholarly works from the last decade (2010-2020). Individual libraries, both large and small, have made great efforts to improve affordability through use of open educational resources (OER), collaborative collection development, and new ebook models. The scholarship documenting these individual library efforts is robust and valuable to the profession. This literature review, however, will focus strictly on library consortia efforts, as opposed to those of individual libraries.

A small number of monographs provide broad overviews of the current state of affairs for library consortia that are engaged in activities that directly affect college affordability. In addition to a general overview of consortia, *Library Consortia: Models for Collaboration and Sustainability* has chapters that document consortial ebook programs in California and Massachusetts and another chapter on the Open SUNY textbook program (Horton and Pronevitz, 2015). *Shared Collections: Collaborative Stewardship*, primarily focuses on various types of shared print programs, but also includes a chapter on an ebook DDA program created by the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries (Hale, 2016). Lastly, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) published a detailed SPEC Kit focused on shared print programs in 2014 (Crist and Stambaugh).

Library consortia have embraced the open educational resources (OER) movement from its beginnings. Consortial efforts to advocate for, and incorporate, OER are only beginning to appear in library science scholarship. UNESCO provides the following definition of OER, "Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching, learning or research materials that are in the public domain or released with intellectual property licenses that facilitate the free use, adaptation and distribution of resources" [II]. Under this definition, OER can include courses, ancillary materials, textbooks, videos, journal articles, and any other tools that support access to knowledge. A

good starting place for an overview of the literature surrounding libraries and OER is Brad

Vogus's article "Open Educational Resources (OER) and Textbooks: Opportunities for

Academic Libraries" (2019). This "Best of the Literature" feature from *Public Services Quarterly*,

highlights important, recent, articles pertaining to library efforts to increase OER usage. The

OhioLINK consortium, which consists of 117 Ohio academic libraries has been an early leader

in its efforts to support OER as state law required that higher education institutions implement

shared curriculum resources that may include OER. Beginning in 2018, OhioLINK's Ohio Open

Ed Collaborative utilized OER materials to create no-cost course content packages for twenty-

two highly enrolled courses. OhioLINK also took initiative to negotiate statewide prices for

eTextbooks from six major textbook publishers. This effort resulted in up to $35 million in annual

savings for Ohio students (Bendo and Evans, 2019; Evans, 2019; Evans, 2018). The CARLI

consortium's OER efforts are documented below and are also mentioned in "Open Illinois:

Supporting Open Educational Resources as a Consortium," published in *Open Praxis, Open

Access: Digital Scholarship in Action* (Ladell *et al.*, 2020). Lastly, Joseph Salem Jr, briefly

considers consortial contributions to OER efforts in his article "Open Pathways to Student

Success: Academic Library Partnerships for Open Educational Resource and Affordable Course

Content Creation and Adoption" (2020).

Consortial ebook lending continues to be a volatile and contentious area of modern academic

library resource sharing. Ebooks are frequently sold or leased to libraries with very restrictive

digital rights management (DRM) terms that do not allow for interlibrary loan or, in some cases,

multiple simultaneous users. The article "Ebook Sharing Models in Academic Libraries" provides

a solid overview of the current state of affairs for consortial ebook sharing models (2019).

Another important article in the study of consortial ebooks is Amy Fry's, "Ebook Rate of Use in

OhioLINK: A Ten-Year Study of Local and Consortial Use of Publisher Packages in Ohio,

College & Research Libraries" (2019). In this article, Fry analyzed ten years of usage data

across the OhioLINK consortium for 100,000 ebooks. She found that an astounding 88% of these ebooks were used by consortium libraries at some point over the study period. Her article also provides a valuable summary of nineteen other published studies that examined rates of ebook use. Bibee *et al.* document the "progress and pitfalls" of a large, long-term ebook program managed by the Orbis Cascade Alliance consortium (2019). Additional studies of consortial ebook platforms and acquisition models have been published by Pronevitz (2015) and Swindler (2016). George Machovec has examined issues specific to consortial ebook licensing (Machovec, 2013; Machovec, 2015). NC Live, a North Carolina library consortium, took a different approach when they assembled a focused collection of unlimited simultaneous use ebooks all from North Carolina Publishers (Morris, 2015).

Libraries are keenly interested in developing affordable demand-driven acquisition (DDA) / patron-driven acquisition (PDA) models. These terms are often used interchangeably, and both mean that some type, or amount, of patron use triggers the acquisition of library materials. In this article we will use the term PDA. PDA models can be applied to ebooks, streaming media, and articles. For libraries, the advantage of PDA models is that only materials that are actually used are purchased or leased. This article specifically documents both consortial print and ebook PDA projects. In a consortial model, multipliers (some number times the value of an individual ebook) are frequently used to determine the price of the ebook. Paying a single yearly fee for access to an ebook collection is another option for consortia. Various DDA/PDA ebook models for consortia have been documented in articles by Harloe, et. al (2015); Robbeloth, et. al. (2017); Denker (2018); and Jabaily and Glazier (2019).

Consortial Book Projects

Ever since American libraries have banded together into consortia, they have looked to control book costs through a variety of coordinated purchasing agreements. These efforts have already been well-documented in the professional literature. In recent years, the ability to utilize a PDA

model for print books has become a viable option. Consortial PDA models for print books

represent significant contributions to overall affordability because they take the guesswork out of

traditional collection development. As the name indicates, under a PDA model, only items that

are specifically requested by patrons are ordered. A study of 1.3 million items purchased by

those within the shared consortial catalog between 2003 and 2008 showed that 33% did not

circulate at all during that period (Wiley, et. al, 2011). Many other academic libraries have found

similar rates of non-circulation (Anderson, 2016). In 2012, following a successful pilot project,

CARLI initiated a new patron driven acquisitions program for print books. This program worked

by identifying items that were not owned by any library in the consortium and regularly loading

MARC records for these titles into the consortial catalog. This consortial PDA program

supplemented traditional collection development by providing patrons with an option to request

materials that no member library had purchased. Rather than any individual library, these

records indicated CARLI as the owning library, and included a note that if requested the item

would be purchased. If a requested book could not be purchased quickly through rush

acquisition in the vendors system, then the request was cancelled, and the patron notified so

that they could request the book through traditional interlibrary loan. To ensure that the

consortium did not purchase materials owned by a member library, holdings information for

these titles were removed if a member purchased the title. The program included English

language titles from university press, trade, scholarly, and professional publishers in the

humanities, social sciences, and the sciences. When a purchase was triggered, the University

of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library, acting on behalf of the consortium, placed a rush order

for the title and then rush processed it when it arrived.

The program was deemed a success since it demonstrated that a print PDA program could

provide new titles to patrons in a timeframe similar to interlibrary loan. Over the course of three

years, 3,045 books were acquired through this consortial print PDA program. Because these

selections were all patron-driven, 96% were checked out after being requested and over 45% of

the titles were used more than once during that time period. When contrasting the 96% rate of

use from this supplemental consortial PDA model to 60-70% for traditional collection

development models the potential savings for individual library materials budgets is clear

(Anderson, 2016).

Following the successful consortial print PDA program, CARLI piloted a consortial ebook PDA

program in 2014. The CARLI Board of Directors funded this project to assess the interest within

the membership for academic ebooks that could be shared across the consortium. At the time,

allowing ebooks to be shared among institutions was relatively new territory for both publishers,

vendors, and library consortia. Traditionally, publishers worked with individual institutions, and

their pricing structure and DRM policies were based on one institution having access to the

content. Any consortial ebook project needed to have equal access for all libraries in the

consortium as a primary goal. For this pilot, it was also deemed critical that all ebooks

purchased have perpetual access as opposed to a short-term leasing model. The ebook PDA

pilot project was designed so that a certain number of uses resulted in the title being purchased

in perpetuity for all members of the consortium. The number of uses and the percentage of the

list price charged to CARLI varied over the course of the project as the publishers strove to

figure out a model that was workable for them. The publishers included in the project were

determined by analyzing previous print purchase data from CARLI members. In all, seventeen

publishers and their imprints opted into the project. For the pilot, titles from the humanities and

social sciences were identified as having the most interest among CARLI member libraries. As a

result, approximately 29,000 ebook titles were added to the consortial catalog. Over the course

of one year, ebooks included in this project were used 35,000 times, resulting in the purchase of

3,858 unique titles. These purchases were funded from the CARLI budget and did not require

additional member contributions. During the pilot project 115 out of the then 130 CARLI member

libraries had a patron use an ebook. Operationalizing this highly successful pilot program was challenging as the state of Illinois had a budget impasse from 2015-2017 which impacted members' financial ability to support an ongoing program.

Following the sunsetting of the CARLI-funded PDA ebook project, a voluntary consortial ebook project was launched in early 2018. This project asked members to purchase two ebooks at a consortially negotiated price. Members were given a list of 16,000 recent titles from the same publishers that had worked with the consortium during the ebook pilot project. To help members identify what they might purchase, consortia staff compared the list of available titles to what was available in print within the shared catalog.

The project was publicized multiple times within a five-month period. Messages were included in the CARLI monthly newsletter and periodic messages were sent to email lists with final messages sent one month and ten days prior to the end of the project. Purchases made in the last month/ten days warrant this approach again for future projects.

Ninety-three percent of all titles that members desired were ultimately purchased This contrasts with the project from the previous year which did not have these lists and had only 33% of items purchased from members selections as titles were not available to buy for consortial use. Pre-determining what was available for purchase allowed members to purchase specific items with a set price and was a key element to making the project successful.

As thirty-eight CARLI members (30% of the membership) purchased 105 ebooks, there was definitely continued interest in consortial ebooks. Most of the participants heeded the call and purchased two ebooks, but some exceeded that number with the most purchased being sixteen titles by one member. Allowing members to select materials that would be of interest to their local patrons as well as priced within their means proved to be a successful way of encouraging participation in this voluntary program. The consortium continues to evaluate methods to share

ebooks among the membership as the 3,992 owned titles continue to be used with over 16,000 loans from 97 members in FY2019.

Collaborative Projects

Individually, CARLI member libraries build collections that support their local needs for research and study. Collectively, these collections form a very robust and rich resource, consisting of over 14.7 million unique bibliographic records and 38.1 million item records. Students are able to utilize this shared collection with no additional costs. Having this resource available via our shared catalog that allows direct patron borrowing and interlibrary loan has allowed resource sharing to flourish within the state. However, the CARLI Collection Management Committee determined that print book collection purchases were steadily declining within the consortium. They found that new print book purchases fell from a peak of more than 200,000 per year in 2011 to 165,000 in 2015. Over roughly the same timeframe, borrowing within the consortial I-Share catalog dropped from almost 450,000 to 300,000 loans. Committee members presumed that reduced budgets, the increased availability of electronic materials, and the continued increase of inflation for library materials, all impacted library purchasing decisions. Since 2015, the Collection Management Committee has concentrated its work on collaborative collection projects with the hopes that coordinated efforts would counteract these observed declines. Projects have included encouraging collaboration for specific subjects, as well as identifying consortium and local practices that would enrich and expand the statewide collection.

In December 2015, the Collection Management Committee surveyed members about their interest in collaborative projects and found there was substantial interest. Following this survey, the committee developed several pilot projects. The most successful was a collaborative education collection development project. The group working on this project concentrated their efforts on K-12 textbooks since those materials were of interest to all members with education programs. The group identified two goals, to review current lending policies for K-12 textbooks

and to increase the amount of these materials in the state. After reviewing members' policies regarding the circulation of these materials and determining that they varied greatly, the group recommended that all members update their policies to allow K-12 textbooks to be loaned. Regardless of any future purchases, allowing the materials to be loaned would increase what students and others throughout the state would have available. For education majors, having easy access to the type of materials they will be using post-graduation has been valuable.

After standardizing circulation policies for curriculum materials, members of this group working on collaborative curriculum materials turned to improving holdings within the consortium. In the survey, members shared that lack of time was one of the main challenges to collaboration. The group created a curated list with easily understood inclusion criteria that would allow for interested members to select items to purchase. This list consisted of K-12 curriculum materials in use by local school districts but not owned by any consortial member. It was developed by reaching out to school districts and reviewing district websites. This collaboration was a success but was dependent on the continued effort of the leaders to communicate with the group members and the CARLI membership. Over a two-year period, 12 curriculum sets were purchased by six members from a curated list of titles.

Having committed leadership for a collaborative project proved essential to maintaining its momentum. Committee members kept a project going while other collaborative efforts faltered due to leadership turnover. This lesson about the importance of dedicated and consistent leadership will come as no surprise to those involved in library consortia projects, but it still merits emphasizing. Aside from consortium staff members, service on CARLI committees is voluntary and generally lasts for three years. Due to these realities, it is critical that consortia identify passionate project champions as leaders and then provide them with clear expectations regarding the committee charge and timeline for outcomes. During the course of these collaborative collection development projects, there were more new committee members than

usual which resulted in some collaborations losing their momentum. In particular, the business, literature, and nursing subject collaborations were not as successful as the education project. After establishing priorities, or a direction, for a collaborative group, making the project easy to understand, as well as easy to participate in, also impacted the success of the collaboration.

Open Educational Resources

Libraries have been advocates of the OER movement since the early days of open access journals. In the past five years, the quantity and quality of open textbooks has increased dramatically, which has increased awareness of the OER movement outside of libraries. Utilization of OER for college courses has a clear and direct impact on college affordability through reductions in course material costs. Library consortia are currently figuring out how to leverage their economies of scale to support their members as they aid their institutional efforts to further OER adoption and utilization. In 2017, CARLI members recognized that creating a consortial OER program could bring all the best elements of consortial coordination to support local programs that were still in their infancy. CARLI's first major OER effort was coordinating funding for consortial membership in the Open Textbook Network (OTN). The OTN is part of the Center for Open Education in the University of Minnesota's College of Education and Human Development. The OTN maintains the Open Textbook Library, a large collection of peer-reviewed open textbooks with Creative Commons licenses that can be used at no cost. Multiple individual CARLI member libraries had expressed interest in consortial membership to the OTN. CARLI staff organized a successful collaborative effort to fund the OTN membership. Seventeen CARLI members plus two smaller Illinois library consortia supported CARLI's membership in the OTN. CARLI was among the first library consortia to join the OTN. Through this collaboratively funded system membership, all CARLI member libraries realize the benefits of OTN membership which include workshops and professional development opportunities.

The educational opportunities provided by the OTN became the springboard that launched additional CARLI OER initiatives. Advocating for OER was new not only for the consortium but also for many member libraries. The OTN provided multiple intensive and in-person train-the-trainer workshops for selected CARLI OER enthusiasts. These workshops generated a knowledgeable and active base of OER advocates that could introduce the topic to other librarians and teaching faculty at their own institutions. Utilizing the OTN's experts and their already-developed training materials allowed CARLI to move quickly into developing other OER initiatives.

Two related CARLI OER initiatives arose from the consortial OTN membership. First, CARLI created a new Open Illinois Initiative with the goal of "facilitat[ing] members' use and support of Open Educational Resources (OER), especially training, advocacy, and coordination of cooperative effort for the benefit of CARLI libraries." To implement the charge of the Open Illinois Initiative, CARLI established an Open Educational Resources Task Force (OERTF) with a one-year term which was then continued for an additional two years. With increasing membership interest in this topic, the CARLI Board approved the task force's proposal to become a standing committee in 2020. This task force drew upon CARLI members that had previously attended the OTN training sessions. This new task force disseminated information related to OER via the consortium's newsletter and a newly created OER email list. The task force also created OER pages on the CARLI website with relevant OER background information [III]. These pages also included information on how to get started locally with OER surveys, data, presentations, and handouts that could be customized with institutional logos and contact information. In addition to this online information, the OERTF provides statewide training opportunities pertaining to OER.

Shortly after its creation, the OERTF adapted a survey originally developed by VIVA, Virginia's Academic Library Consortium, that helped the task force gain a better understanding of how libraries were currently supporting OER efforts on their campus [IV]. The survey received over 133 survey responses, or over two-thirds of the total consortium membership. This response rate indicated sustained interest in OER. Over half the responses (57%) indicated that their institutions were either exploring or using OER and that libraries were largely responsible for leading these efforts. The individual responses to the question, "How would you suggest CARLI support OER across Illinois?" provided a roadmap for future task force workshops, webinars, and professional development opportunities.

A recent major initiative of the OTN has been the creation of a Certificate in OER Librarianship program. This intensive OER professional development program was originally developed with the Association of College and Research Libraries and Creative Commons and was funded by a Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The first iteration of the program was as an OER Librarian Bootcamp that had both online and in-person components (Open Textbook Network, 2017). As currently configured, it consists of two months of online instruction, three days of intensive in-person instruction, and additional follow-up work culminating in the implementation of an individual OER project at each participant's home institution. Sensing an opportunity to make significant inroads to achieving the goals of the Open Illinois Initiative, CARLI created a program to support up to five CARLI member librarians to attend the certificate program. CARLI funding covered the program fees and a $600 travel allowance. In the first year of this incentive program, five librarians from CARLI institutions took advantage of the program.

Open access scholarly ebooks are distinct from open textbooks and can be useful course content. In recent years, some academic publishers began to offer scholarly open access ebooks. The author selects to publish their monograph open access with no fee or cost for the

reader. The title will typically follow the traditional publishing processes, including peer-review. However, as these books are free, they do not fit into the usual library acquisition and technical services processes. With this in mind, the Collection Management Committee surveyed members in 2018 on their practice with open access ebooks and over half of the members responded. The responses to the survey, which included desired and undesired attributes, helped the committee create a consortial collection development policy for open access materials. The committee then developed a pilot project which used the policy to identify open access materials to add to the shared catalog. The pilot project's goal was to develop the workflows needed by the committee and CARLI staff to add identified collections to a curated and shared open access collection. Members were asked to opt-in if they wished to have the records for this consortial collection appear in their local catalog. This project continues with the goal to help members identify scholarly materials that are freely available.

CARLI is currently working diligently to maintain the momentum of the Open Illinois Initiative. This consists of reaffirming the continued need for coordination of effort by establishing a standing committee, continuing to provide education opportunities, and developing new programs for members. The consortium is working to establish a relationship with an online collaboration platform which will provide members a site to organize both their OER work and their faculty's work with OER. The consortium is also developing a program to provide faculty workshops for members so that members can continue to develop their local programs.

Conclusion

This article has outlined initiatives that the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois has developed to rethink twenty-first century academic libraries contributions towards college affordability. As we have indicated, CARLI has often been among those at the forefront of piloting new models and licensing agreements for library consortia. As other library consortia adapt and improve upon the ideas presented here, substantial inroads to reducing the overall

cost of college can be made. What might those adaptations consist of and what may be future areas of focus for library consortia to increase college affordability?

Print books have formed the basis of library collections for millennia; however, print books have processing and storage costs that do not apply to ebooks that are compounded within a consortium when individual libraries purchase the same item. Housing books requires physical space with all its associated heating, cooling, lighting, and cleaning costs. In today's information age, lending books between physical locations is a slow process that is dependent on costs outside the control of the library such as fossil fuels. The current model is becoming less and less sustainable. By expanding electronic offerings, libraries are able to provide materials at the point of need as well as eliminate some costs associated with physical collections. In 2020, when library buildings closed mid-semester due to COVID-19, libraries rapidly increased their efforts to provide electronic access to materials. Ebooks are not a panacea for all the problems facing academic library collections, but some of their advantages are clear. Once cataloged, there is no processing or storage of physical items. Consortially licensed ebooks can help maximize collection development budgets since the purchase price can be less expensive than multiple libraries purchasing and processing the same title. They are also available immediately to any patron without costly physical transport. Consortia with their collective purchasing power can negotiate with publishers for terms such as interlibrary loan rights that have traditionally been unavailable to individual institutions. As detailed above, PDA models for both print and ebooks can stretch budgets even further since they provide access when it is needed.

To date, expanding these collaborative projects and purchasing models to include other formats, such as streaming video, have not been as widespread. Physical media formats are no longer the preferred method of acquiring video for academic libraries due to their inconvenient storage and playback needs. Streaming video platforms have increasingly been replacing physical media over the past decade and new streaming video collections are rolled out by

vendors on an annual basis. Whereas libraries in the past could easily send a video through the mail via interlibrary loan, it is quite rare for streaming videos acquired by individual libraries to have any sort of interlibrary lending, or consortial sharing, rights. Moreover, streaming video cost for an institution is much higher than the previous cost for the equivalent physical format due to the increased 24/7 online availability. Some consortia have explored how collaborative streaming might work. For example, in 2014, eight academic libraries of the Western New York Library Resources Council piloted a PDA project that all deemed a success; however, among their conclusions they noted that there was little duplicative usage among their group and that "individual [institutional] PDA programs would have been slightly more economical" (Knab, 2016). The Colorado Libraries Electronic Resources Team (CLERT) experienced similar results with a PDA model for streaming videos from Alexander Street Press. At the end of the pilot project they were surprised to learn that not a single video was used by all member libraries. They concluded, "...it appears that patron needs may be too disparate at each library to warrant continuation of a consortial EBA program for streaming videos" (Spratt, 2017). In both cases, the institutions involved found value in the project; however, consortia strive to both expand access and lower cost. Under current licensing agreements and pricing, most have found negotiated discounts for local access to be most helpful for members so they then can fulfill their local content needs. As much of the video content has been produced for the lucrative consumer market, few academic consortia have succeeded in convincing vendors to offer reasonably priced streaming video content that is available across the consortium. However, as the market matures and competition increases among the various platforms, consortial streaming options will remain a priority area for further experimentation and research.

OER are a rapidly growing area of interest for academic libraries. Widescale adoption of, and support for, OER has the potential to drive down course materials costs and improve college affordability. This case study documented some of CARLI's efforts to support OER through its

consortial programs. OER advocacy is a relatively new area of focus, but library consortia have rapidly launched into providing an infrastructure and support for members as they develop robust local programs. Infrastructure and support that library consortia could provide include workshops, shared training materials, creating a shared repository of OER materials, and participating in federal/state OER advocacy. Working with an established organization, such as the Open Textbook Network, can help to both jumpstart a program and provide continued support as programs grow.

Currently, one of the most effective ways of increasing OER adoption is small grants made directly to faculty to incorporate OER into their classes (Alpi, et. al., 2017; Blick and Marcus, (2017); Harwell and Arthur, 2017). Consortia and individual libraries can advance OER adoption through facilitating small grants that encourage faculty to engage with the current range of OER materials in their discipline.

Another area of OER focus for consortia that is poised for significant expansion is direct support for the creation of open content including scholarly books, journals, textbooks, and ancillary teaching materials. Academic libraries understand the traditional scholarly publishing system is an antiquated one where faculty authors largely produce content for free and publishers sell the authors' output back to the institutions whose faculty produced it. This business model has resulted in some scholarly publishers with yearly profit margins that consistently exceed those of the best technology companies (MIT Libraries, 2019). Academic libraries, as the primary consumers of scholarly books and journals, are currently working to change scholarly publishing. One way of accomplishing this is moving a portion of collection development funds to supporting open access scholarly book publishing efforts such as Knowledge Unlatched and unglue.it [V]. If this model of open scholarly publishing is supported by more libraries, it could help to revitalize smaller university presses who have struggled in the current market.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the largest economic and social crisis of our generation. Its effects will reverberate in all areas of American life for years. Its impact on higher education along with reversing the trend of ever-increasing tuition costs and the associated massive student debts will require a wholescale rethinking of higher education in the United States. Libraries alone cannot fix the college affordability problem, but they are poised to aid their institutions as they work collectively to decrease the cost of research and course materials. The highly collaborative work of library consortia can set an example for other areas of higher education to follow in the ongoing quest to improve affordability.

Notes

I.   CARLI Committee Directory: https://www.carli.illinois.edu/governance/committee-directory/comm?comm_id=40&constit=no&dates=yes (accessed 15, June 2020).

II. UNESCO Open Educational Resources: https://en.unesco.org/themes/ict-education/oer (accessed 15, June 2020).

III. CARLI Open Illinois initiative website: https://www.carli.illinois.edu/products-services/collections-management/open-ed-resource-overview (accessed 15, June 2020).

IV. The text and results of the CARLI OER survey can be found here: https://www.carli.illinois.edu/sites/files/coll_man/2017_CARLI_OERSurvey.pdf (accessed 15, June 2020).

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