Frontline Advocacy

Academic Libraries

“Promoting and/or advocating for library and information services, resources and expertise, while not typically everyone’s job or passion, is essential to a healthy future for libraries in ALL kinds of communities and environments.”
– 2009-2010 ALA President Dr. Camila Alire

Frontline library advocates work in college and university libraries, and are both the internal and external face of the library. They tell the library’s story and deliver the library’s message. In the academic library world, everyone who works for the library -- librarians, desk clerks, catalogers, bibliographers, student interns, even building maintenance workers -- needs to think of herself or himself as a “frontline advocate” for the library. Academic library staff members are perfectly poised to learn what library users and others have to say about the library, as well as to inform people about the library’s needs. Because every library staff member is the face of the library to the academic community and to the world at large, each influences what others know and think about the library. Even when an staff member’s job responsibilities does not put them in direct contact library users, frontline employees can still talk to people (students, professors and other instructors, colleagues, college/university administrative staff, neighbors, relatives and friends) about the value of the library to the academic institution.

Content, delivered through ALA’s Advocacy University and Alire’s Presidential website, includes an extensive toolkit with print and media education and training material designed for academic libraries. This in-depth resource includes general frontline advocacy content and worksheets and:

23 (Advocacy) Things (Tips) for Frontline Employees; Frontline Advocacy Every Day: Leadership and Staff Working Together; Going Deeper: The Role of Library Leadership in Planning for Frontline Advocacy; Goals, Objectives, and Strategies; Communication Tools; Six Good Excuses That Won’t Work (Aimed at reluctant employees)


Join the Alire initiative to use all of our libraries resources – materials, resources and services, and library employees - in the critical effort to ensure today and tomorrow’s libraries.
A special thank you goes to the Neal-Schuman Foundation for their contribution to the Initiative.