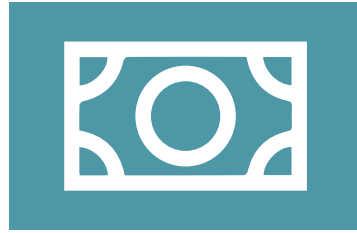
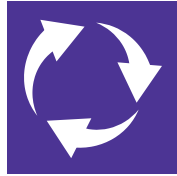


Advancing learning
Transforming scholarship

Association of College & Research Libraries
A division of the American Library Association



The State of U.S. Academic Libraries

FINDINGS FROM THE ACRL
2024 ANNUAL SURVEY



Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), conducts the annual Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey to understand the evolving roles of libraries in higher education. The survey gathers critical metrics on academic library staff, expenditures, collections, circulation, and information services. The data help librarians, administrators, and stakeholders assess the impact of academic libraries, make peer comparisons, and track trends over time.

This report focuses on U.S. academic libraries in fiscal year 2024 (the 2023–24 academic year). For the first time this year, the results are weighted to be representative of all U.S. academic libraries, unless otherwise noted. Key findings include:



Staff: The average full-time equivalent (FTE) library staff is 36.2 and the median is 15.7. Doctoral universities have much higher staffing levels than all other types. Associate's colleges and two-year institutions have the highest ratio of students to staff.



Expenditures: In 2024, total annual library expenditures reached an average of \$2.1 million and median of \$487,000 dollars, excluding fringe benefits.



Collections and circulation: 79.6% of academic library collections are in digital or electronic format. Digital materials account for 93.2% of total circulation.



Instruction: More than half (54.8%) of presentations to groups happen synchronously, and those presentations account for 75.8% of total annual attendance.



Accessibility: Most academic libraries (90.2%) have an accessible main entrance and inside the library, 94.4% have wheelchair-accessible hallways. However, only about half (51.6%) have computers with accessible technologies and software.

The 2024 Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey results show academic libraries adapting to a rapidly shifting information landscape and expanding access for users. While disparities in staffing and funding persist across institution types, libraries continue to play a vital role in supporting research, instruction, and student success. ACRL is committed to advancing, and advocating for, academic libraries and library workers in that role. Continued participation in the survey is essential to ensure libraries remain visible, valued, and equipped to meet the evolving needs of higher education.

About the Trends and Statistics Survey

The ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics survey took its current form in 2015.¹ The [ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey Editorial Board](#) develops the trends section each year and works to revise the survey instrument as needed to reduce respondent burden and better meet the needs of the field. The 2024 survey covers fiscal year 2024, defined as the most recent twelve-month period that ends before October 1, 2024, corresponding to the institution's fiscal year. The data reported here thus reflects the 2023–2024 academic year.

The 2024 trends section focused on Library Support for Open Initiatives. The results from the 2024 trends section are not included in this report; they can be found in the [March 2026 issue of C&RL News](#). The 2024

survey also included a special section with questions about accessibility for people with disabilities in library spaces and programs. These new questions were developed through a partnership with ALA's Public Programs Office and its Libraries Transform Communities initiative, in consultation with the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services and the Public Library Association (the same questions appeared on PLA's 2024 survey). See the [ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics LibGuide](#) for links to the 2024 survey instructions and worksheet.

Since 2021, ACRL has administered its annual surveys in-house via the Benchmark platform (librarybenchmark.org). The surveys are open to all U.S. academic institutions with libraries, as well as international institutions. In 2024, a total of 3,521 institutions were invited to participate and 1,386 completed the survey, for a response rate of 39.4%. For U.S. institutions only (the focus of this report), 3,457 institutions were invited and 1,367 of those completed the survey, a response rate of 39.5%. The response rate is similar to prior years.

The results presented in this report are weighted (unless otherwise noted) and therefore representative of all U.S. academic libraries. The use of nonprobability sample weighting accounts for differences between the responding institutions and the full population of U.S. institutions with academic libraries. The weighted results presented here are not directly comparable to previous years, which were unweighted, and therefore skewed by the nature of the respondents. ACRL has undertaken this change to ensure we can provide the field with representative data beyond the sunset of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Academic Libraries component after FY 2024.² With the loss of that comprehensive, federal dataset, ACRL is working to ensure we can continue to provide high-quality data to support library peer comparisons and assessment. See [Appendix A](#) for further details of the survey methodology.

The charts and tables included in this report show results for U.S. academic libraries overall and by Carnegie classification (2021 vintage), a designation that describes characteristics of institutions by the types of degrees they award.³ For the purposes of this report, all responding institutions are grouped into one of five simplified categories: associate's colleges and two-year institutions; baccalaureate colleges; master's colleges & universities; doctoral universities; and other, which includes special focus four-year institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and not classified. On the whole, associate's colleges and two-year institutions tend to have smaller budgets and fewer library staff, even relative to the smaller size of their student bodies, while doctoral universities sit at the other end of the spectrum. Full data from the annual Trends and Statistics Surveys are available via ACRL's Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends tool (librarybenchmark.org). The following sections provide a summary of findings at the national level.

Staff

Library staff provide services vital to supporting student success, academic research, and institution-wide community building. In 2024, U.S. academic libraries report an average (mean) full-time equivalent (FTE) library staff of 19.4 and a median of 8. By Carnegie classification, doctoral universities have much larger staffs than other types of institutions, as illustrated in [Figure 1](#). The ratio of students to library staff overall is 204 students per one staff member (FTE).⁴ Associate's colleges and two-year institutions have the highest ratio, at 388 students per staff member. The rate is lowest among other (117) and baccalaureate (163) institutions, while master's (208) and doctoral (179) fall in the middle of the range (see [Tables 1](#) and [2](#)).

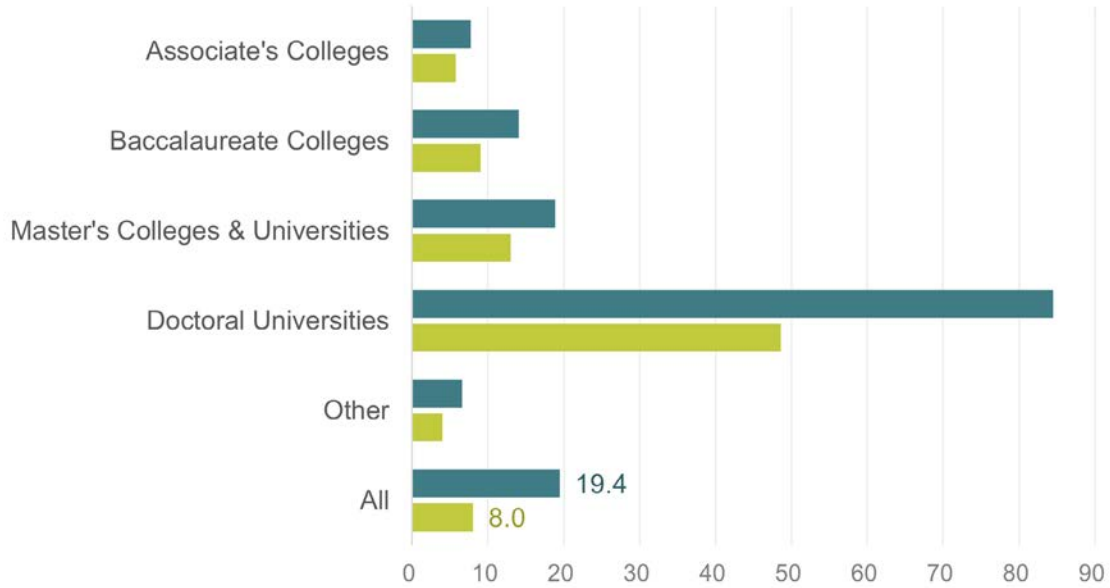


Figure 1. Total Staff FTE (mean and median) by Carnegie Classification. See [Table 1](#) for detailed results.

The survey breaks library staff into four categories: librarians, other professional staff, student assistants, and all other paid staff. The distribution varies by institution type. Overall, librarians comprise about a third (35%) of total staff FTE ([Figure 2](#)). Only among institutions in the other classification, which includes special focus four-year institutions, is the proportion close to half (46.4%). Student assistants make up a larger share of staff FTE at baccalaureate (35.5%) and master’s institutions (33.4%), reflecting their generally smaller size and undergraduate focus.⁵

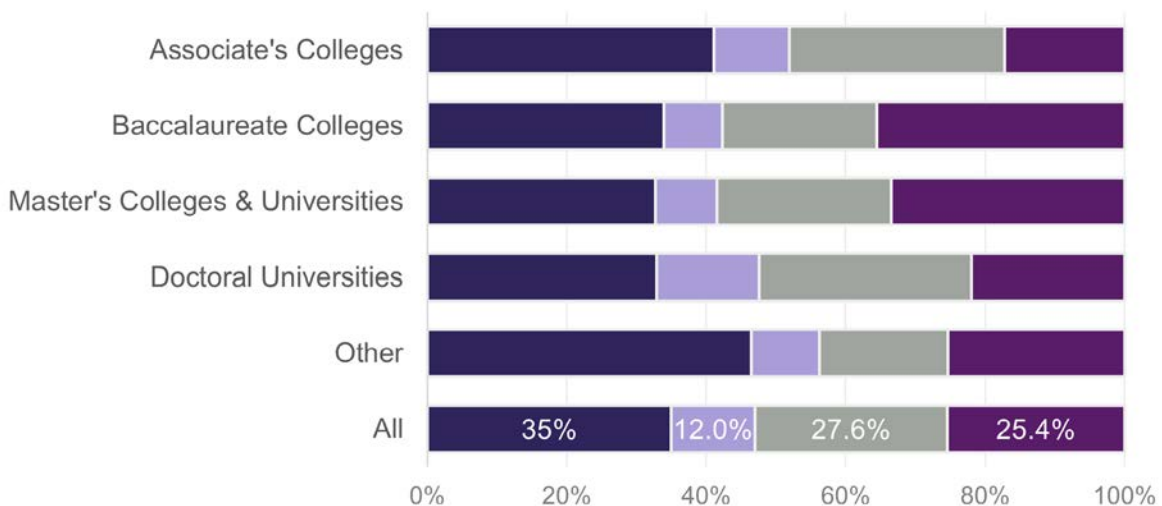


Figure 2. Staff FTE by type as a percent of total. See [Table 3](#) for detailed results.

Expenses

In 2024, academic libraries report average total expenditures of almost \$2.1 million and median expenditures of almost half a million dollars (excluding fringe benefits). [Figure 3](#) shows that doctoral universities stand out with significantly higher total expenditures, reflective of their larger size and research orientation. Overall, academic libraries spend \$523 per student FTE. Institutions in the other classification spend the most (\$940) and associate's colleges spend the least (\$174).

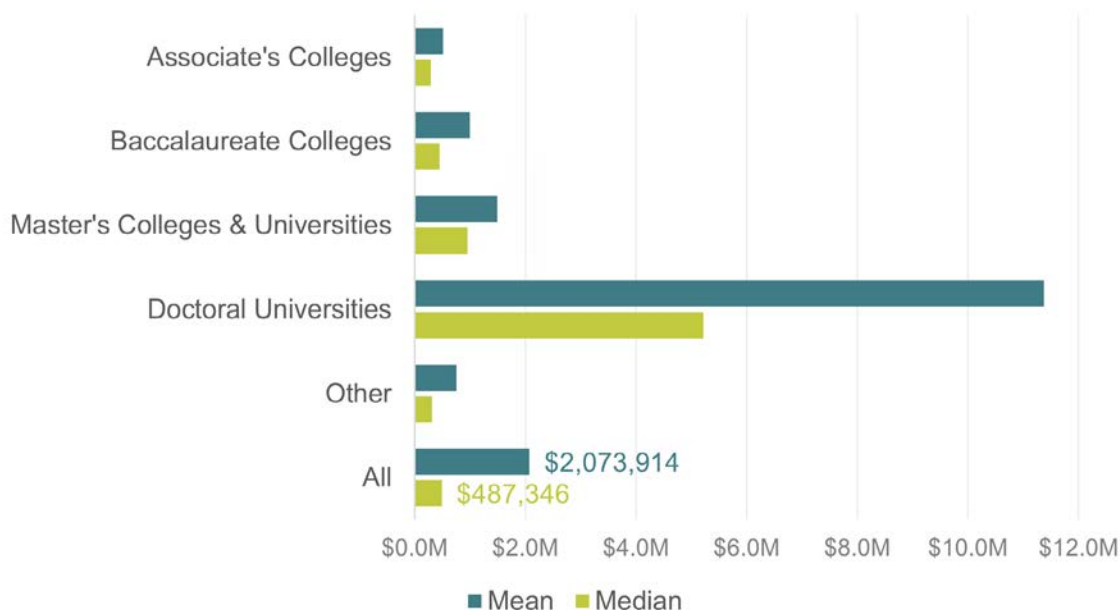


Figure 3. Total expenditures (mean and median) excluding fringe by Carnegie classification. See [Table 4](#) for detailed results.

The weighted results for 2024 are not directly comparable with earlier years, which were unweighted. Comparing the unweighted expenditures for 2023 and 2024, adjusted for inflation, reveals a 6.6% increase in the mean and a 2.9% increase in the median total library expenditures excluding fringe benefits.⁶ Given that doctoral universities are overrepresented among the survey respondents, this may not accurately reflect the trend among all U.S. academic libraries.

The survey asks respondents to break library expenditures into three major categories: Staffing expenditures make up the largest share of the total, at 48.3% overall. Materials and services comprise 41.7% of the total. Libraries spend the smallest portion of their budgets on operations and maintenance, 9.9% of the total. By Carnegie classification, associate's colleges spend the greatest share on staff salaries and wages and the lowest share on operations and maintenance, while doctoral universities spend the most on materials and services. [Figure 4](#) shows a detailed breakdown of expenditures as a percent of total by type.

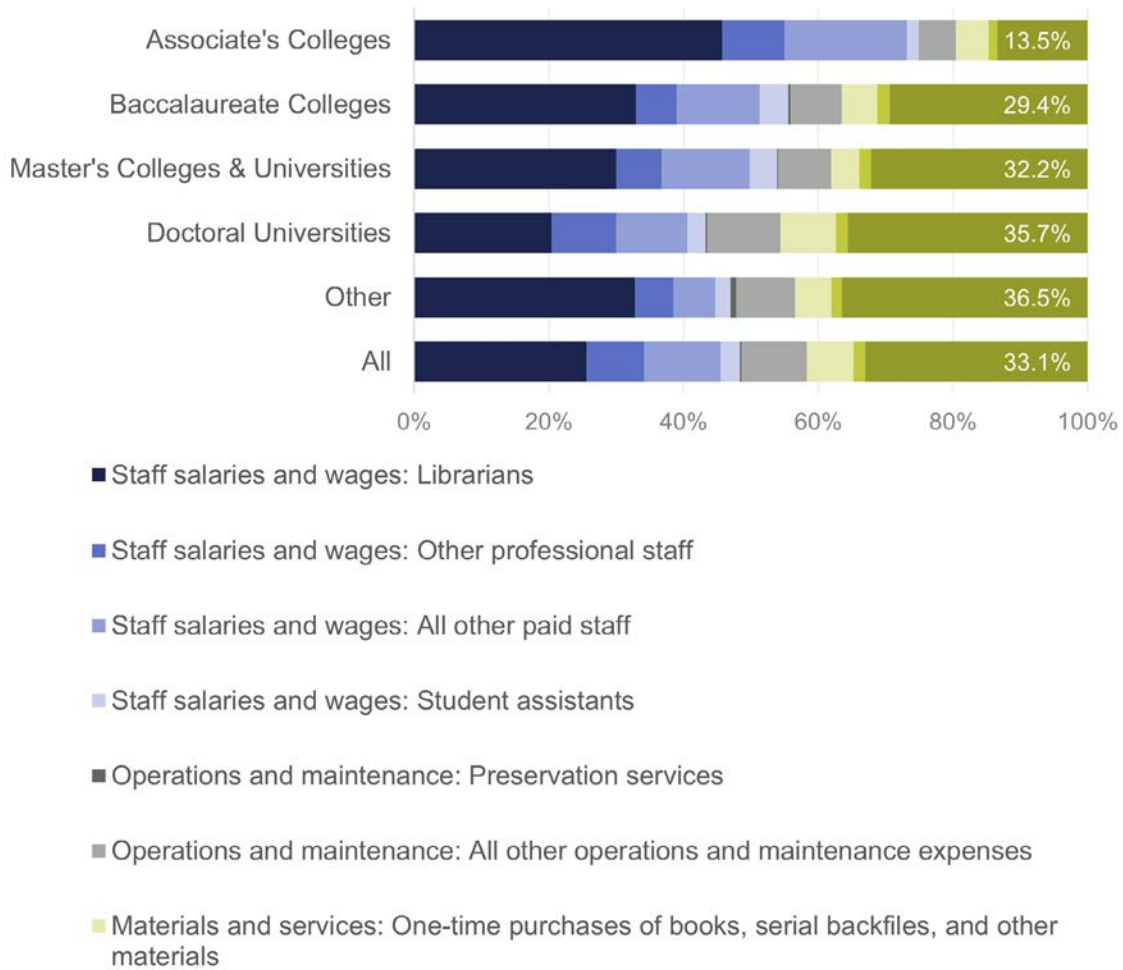


Figure 4. Expenditures by type as percent of total by Carnegie classification. See [Table 5](#) for detailed results.

Overall, 33.1% of total academic library expenditures (excluding fringe benefits) go towards ongoing commitments to subscriptions, represented by the green bars on the right in [Figure 4](#). This rate is highest among libraries in the other classification, which includes special focus four-year institutions such as law, medical, and professional schools. Associate’s colleges and two-year institutions spend the least on subscriptions, at 13.5% of the total.

Collections and Circulation

Libraries have increasingly focused on digital and electronic resources and, as of 2024, 20.4% of collection holdings are in physical format and 79.6% in digital format. The mean number of items in a physical collection is 214,680 and median is 47,551. Collection size and format vary significantly by Carnegie classification: Doctoral universities stand out as having the largest physical collections in terms of both total size (mean of 1.2 million) and proportion of items in the collection that are physical (41.1%). Among associate’s colleges and two-year institutions, physical collections make up only 3.8% of the total and they are much smaller in size (mean of 31,106).

However, comparing collection format to usage highlights interesting patterns across institutions of different types. While digital and electronic materials make up the largest proportion of the total collection size in associate’s colleges, those institutions have the lowest rate of digital circulation as a percent of the total. Doctoral universities have the lowest proportion of digital materials and the highest rate of digital circulation ([Figure 5](#)).

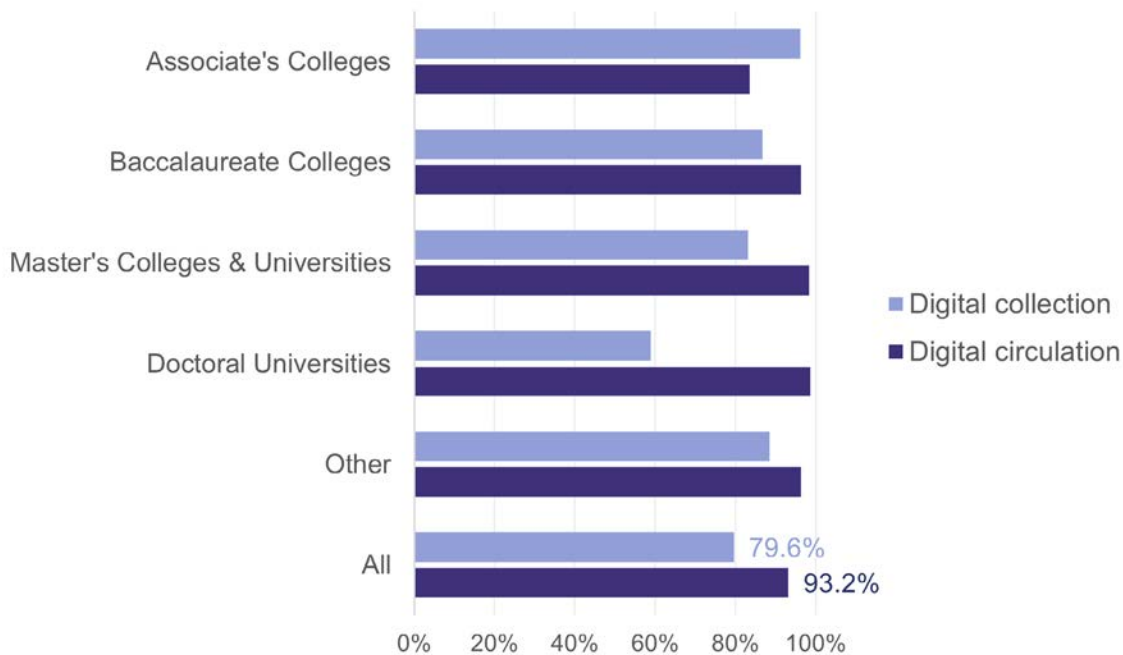


Figure 5. Digital materials as percent of total collection size and digital circulation as a percent of total circulation. See [Tables 6 and 7](#) for detailed results.

The mean total circulation in 2024 is 449,719 and the median is 48,176. Overall, academic libraries circulate 117 items annually per full-time equivalent student. The rate is highest among associate’s colleges (187) and lowest at baccalaureate institutions (53). See [Table 8](#) for detailed results.

Information Services

Library staff share expertise through information services for individuals and instruction for groups. For individuals, reference transactions and consultations are broadly defined as information contacts involving the knowledge, use, recommendations, or instruction in the use of one or more resources by a library staff member. In 2024, for annual transactions and consultations, either in person or virtually, academic libraries report a mean of 3,344 and median of 1,132. Libraries report a mean of 881 and median of 210 virtual reference transactions and consultations (see [Table 9](#)).

Where possible, reference transactions and consultations for individuals are counted separately. While both involve staff sharing knowledge and recommendations on the use of library resources, consultations are distinguished as more in-depth services, often scheduled in advance, and requiring specialized expertise. Consultations make up a small proportion of information services to individuals overall, 6.6% of the total, while 79.1% are transactions, and 14.3% could be either transactions or consultations (not reported separately).

[Figure 6](#) shows that master’s colleges and universities have the highest proportion of transactions and lowest

proportion of consultations. Baccalaureate institutions report the highest rate of consultations, 9.7% of total reference services to individuals.

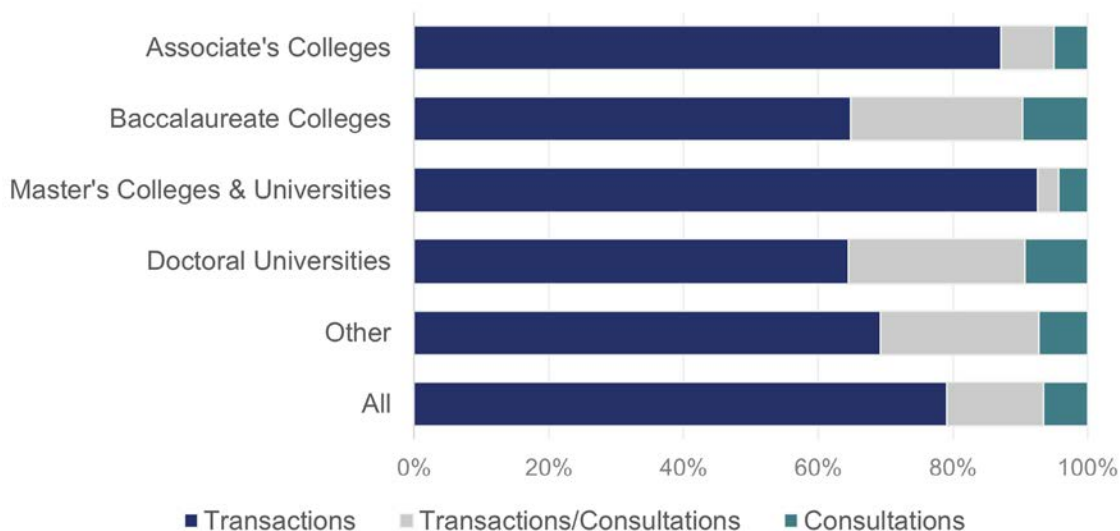


Figure 6. Information services to individuals by type as a percent of total. See [Table 10](#) for detailed results.

Library staff regularly conduct instruction, workshops, and other programs for groups. On average, academic libraries hold 198 annual presentations for groups and have an average attendance of 2,462. More than half (54.8%) of presentations happen synchronously, and those presentations account for 75.8% of total attendance ([Figure 7](#)). 45.2% of presentations to groups are asynchronous and account for 24.2% of attendance ([Figure 8](#)). Associate's colleges report the highest proportion of asynchronous presentations and attendance.

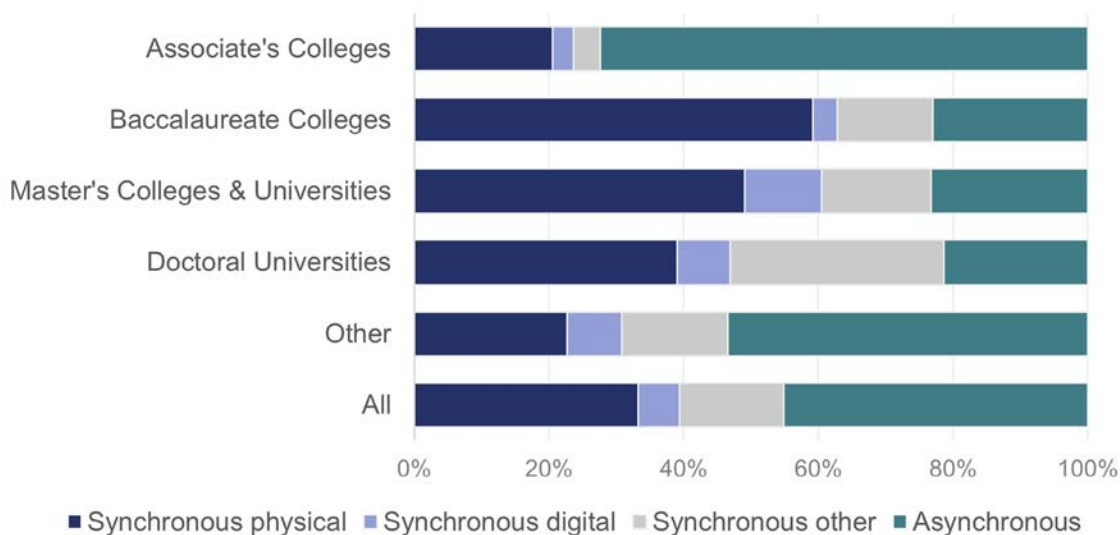


Figure 7. Presentations to groups by modality as a percent of total. See [Table 12](#) for detailed results.

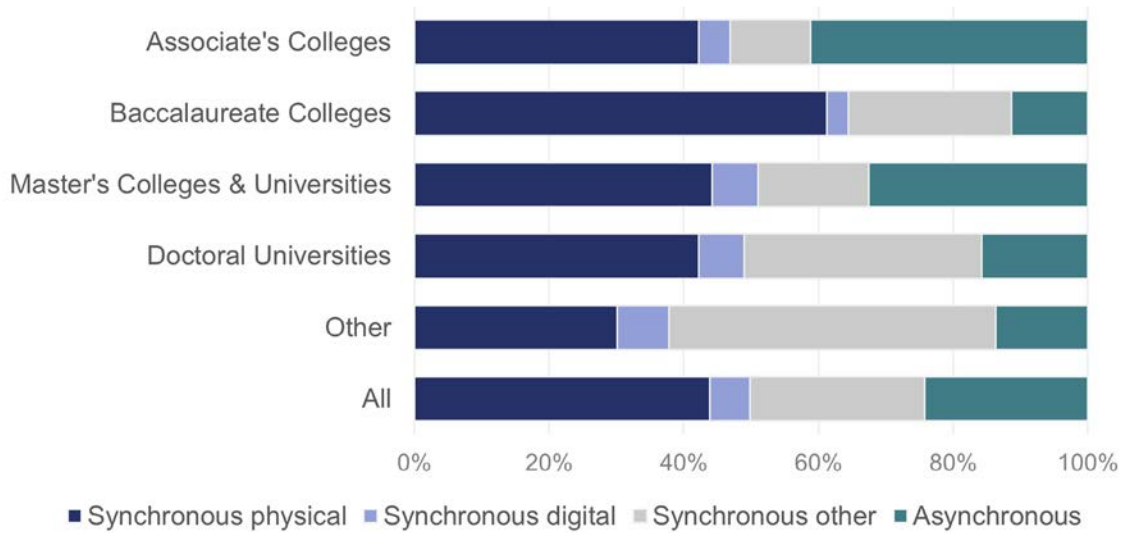


Figure 8. Attendance at presentations to groups by modality as a percent of total. See [Table 13](#) for detailed results.

While counts of information services capture direct interactions between library users and staff, gate counts reflect the number of visits to the library. These are captured in two ways: an annual total, and a count for a typical week during the academic year. Overall, U.S. academic libraries report mean annual gate count of 142,993 and median of 48,306. On a weekly basis, the mean is 3,769 and median 1,116 (see [Table 14](#)). Annually, 30.9 visits to the library are reported per full-time equivalent student ([Figure 9](#)). Doctoral universities have the highest gate counts, but baccalaureate colleges have the highest rate per student FTE. Associate's colleges and two-year institutions report the lowest number of visits per student FTE, perhaps reflecting the fact that their students are more likely to be part-time or online.

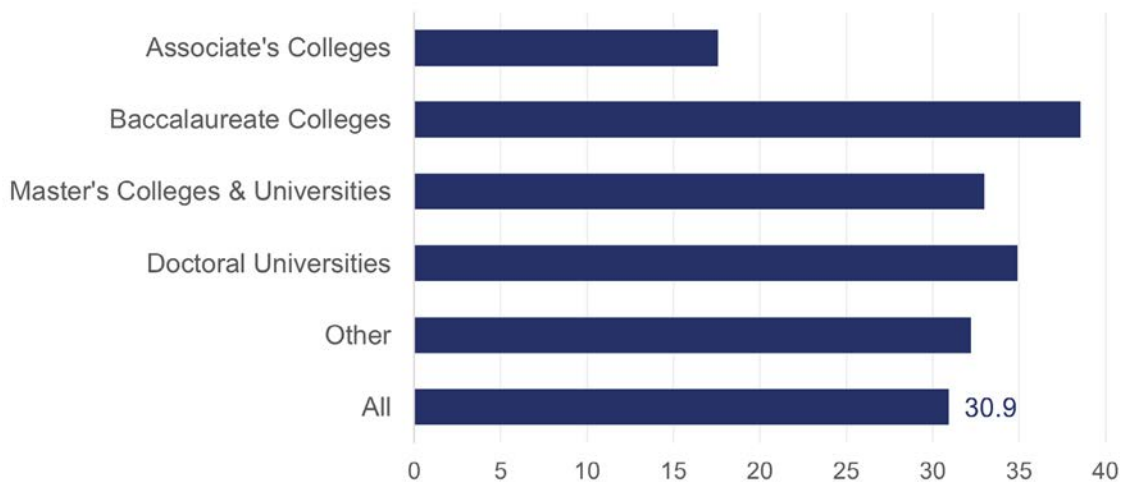


Figure 9. Annual gate count per student FTE. See [Table 15](#) for detailed results.

Special Section: Accessibility

The 2024 survey included a special section with questions about accessibility for people with disabilities in library spaces and programs. For the purposes of the survey, accessibility is defined as “ensuring that opportunity is afforded to persons with disabilities to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as someone without a disability,” a definition adapted from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights and the American Alliance of Museums. The survey questions focus primarily on physical, rather than digital, accessible facilities and practices in libraries. The results will support ALA’s continued advocacy for funding to increase the accessibility of libraries to ensure everyone within the community can benefit from the information, resources, and services they provide.

Figures 10 and **11** illustrate the prevalence of specific physical accommodations implemented outside and inside the library to support access for individuals with disabilities. (For institutions with multiple library branches, respondents were asked to answer for the main or central library.) Nearly all (96.1%) of academic libraries have an accessible path or sidewalk to the entrance, and most (90.2%) have an accessible main entrance. In most instances, doctoral universities report having these physical accommodations at the highest rates.

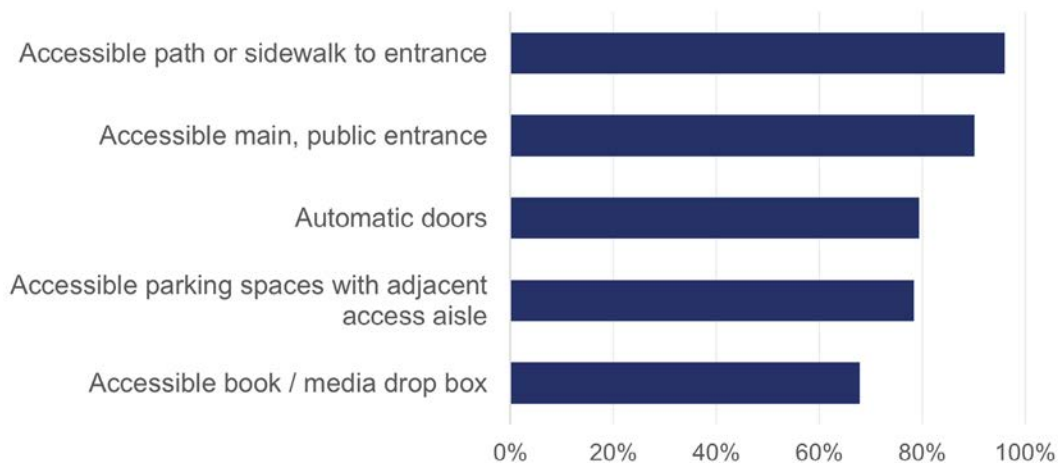


Figure 10. Physical accommodations outside the library. See [Table 16](#) for detailed results by Carnegie classification.

Inside the library the most common physical accommodations overall are wheelchair-accessible hallways (94.4%), accessible furniture (88.3%), and emergency alarms with both audible and visual indicators (85.3%). For multi-story buildings, 92% of libraries have an elevator or chair lift. Only about half (51.6%) of academic libraries have public computers with accessible technologies and software.

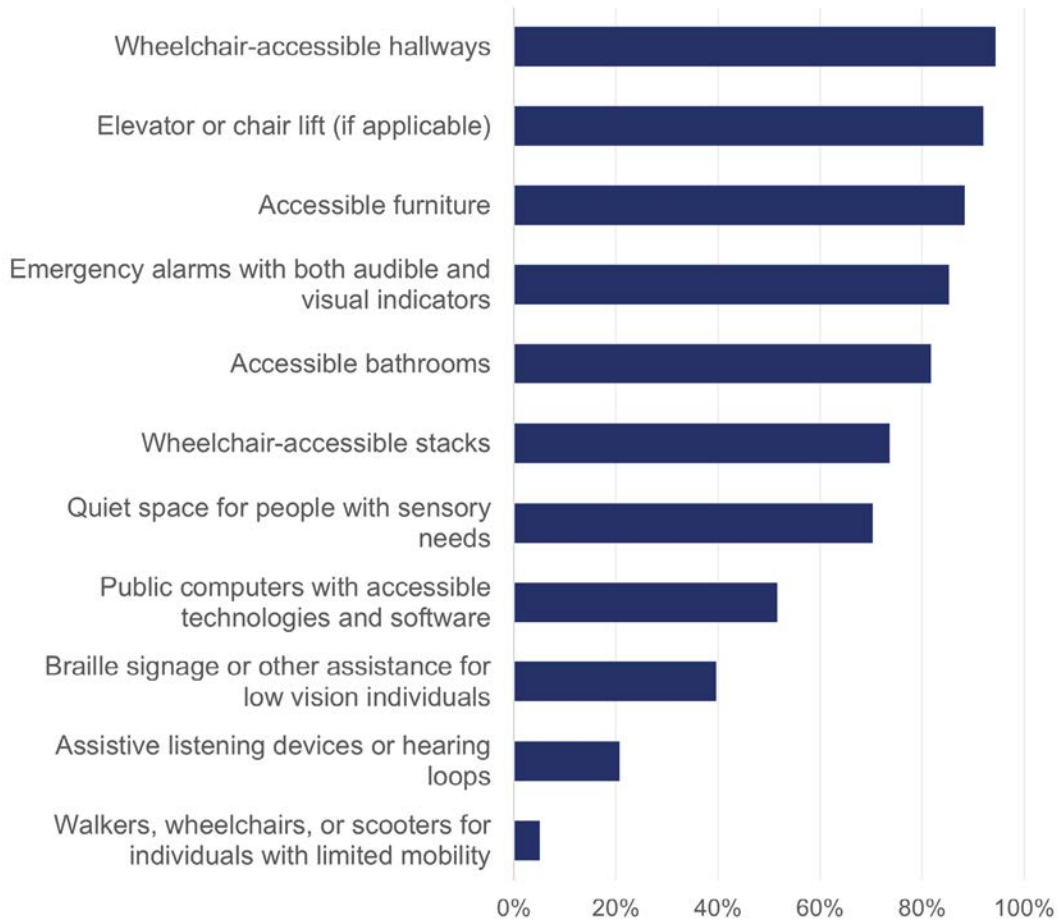


Figure 11. Physical accommodations inside the library. See [Table 17](#) for detailed results by Carnegie classification.

Another question asked what resources are available to patrons with disabilities who attend library programs or classes, either as standard practice or upon request ([Figure 12](#)). The most common resources offered by all libraries are extra time to complete activities or assignments (71.4%) and multiple types of seating (70.7%). Associate’s colleges and two-year institutions are more likely than institutions of other types to offer these types of resources in programs or classes.

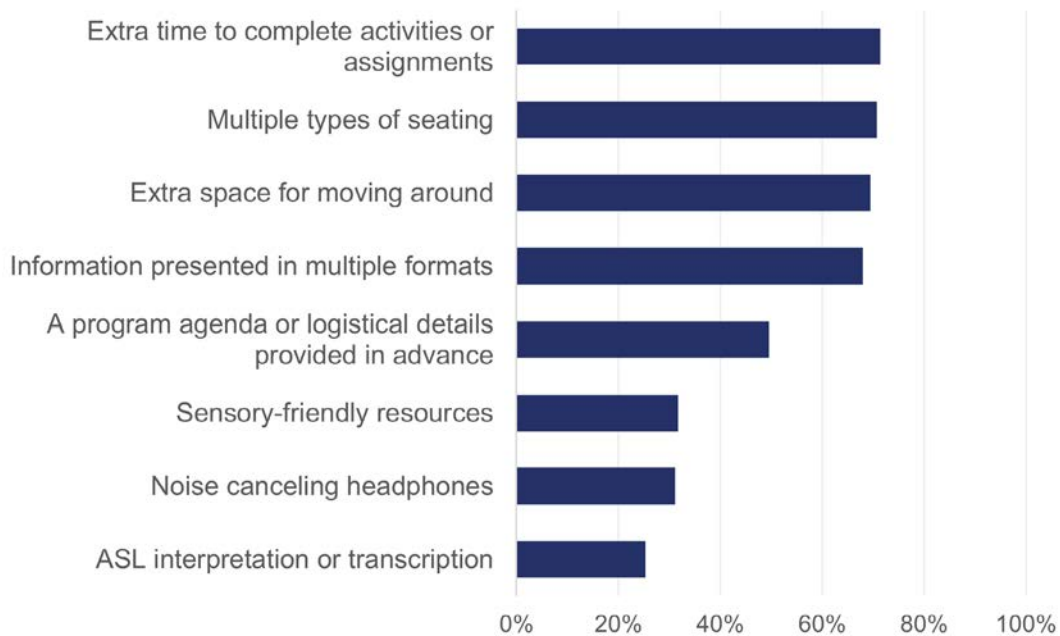


Figure 12. Accessibility resources in programs or classes. See [Table 18](#) for detailed results by Carnegie classification.

Asked about limitations on their ability to improve the accessibility of library facilities, overall, the top reason libraries select is cost or budget, with 82.1% indicating this is a factor. However, the results of this question show significant variation by Carnegie classification ([Figure 13](#)). Doctoral universities are most likely to indicate they have buildings constructed before the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990. Master's colleges and universities are slightly more likely than other types of institutions to report that lack of awareness among stakeholders or community members is a factor. Associate's colleges are more likely to report that organizational or leadership buy-in is a factor.

Accessibility Resources

- » ALA provides many [Accessibility Resources](#) and guides to best practices for libraries.
- » Several [member groups](#) across ALA work in this area and offer opportunities to connect to peers, including ACRL's [Universal Accessibility Interest Group](#).
- » The Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities initiative from ALA's Public Programs Office provides [grants](#) that are open to qualifying academic libraries.

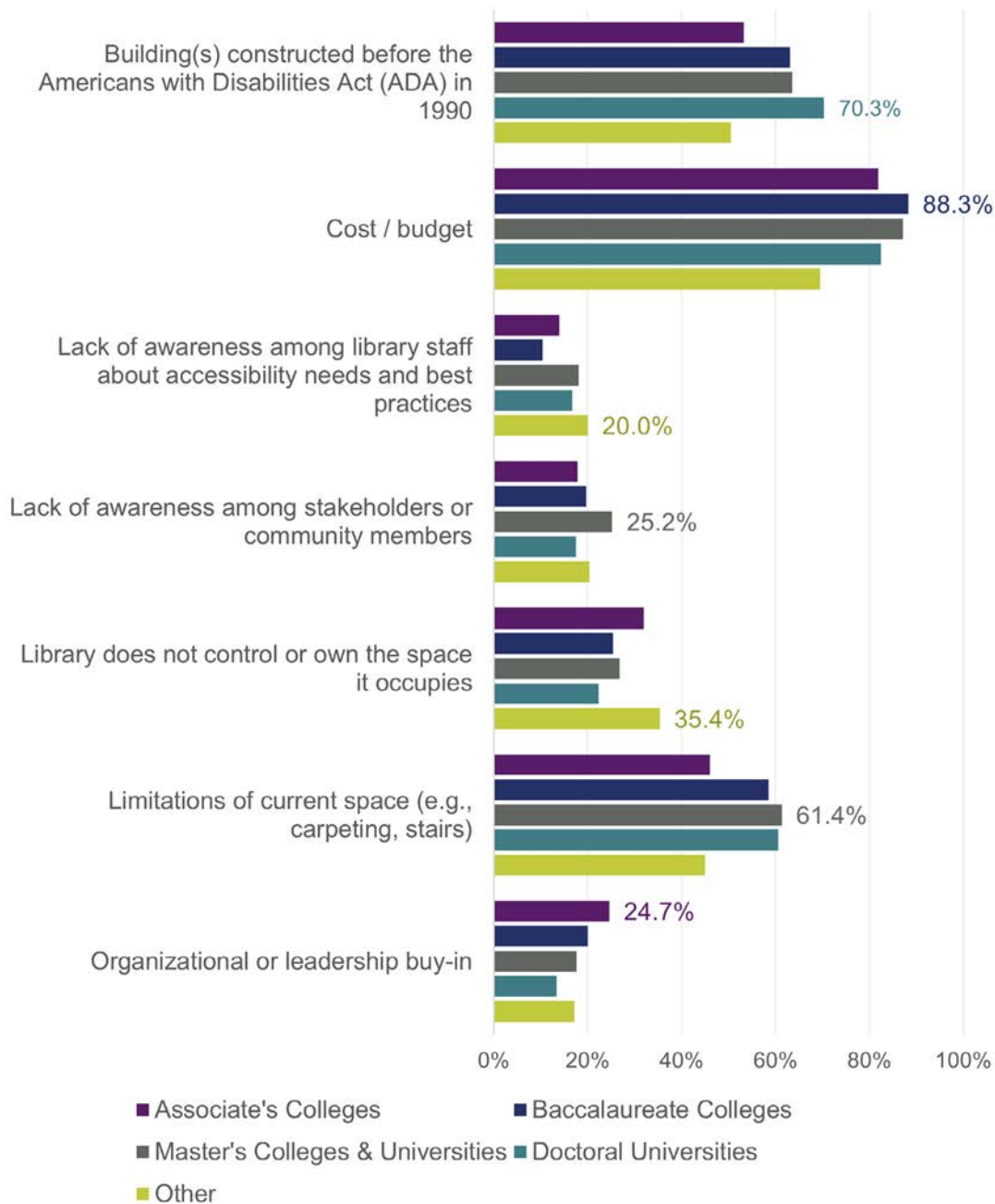


Figure 13. Limitations on the library’s ability to improve accessibility of facilities. The data labels indicate the Carnegie classification with the highest percentage for each factor identified. See [Table 19](#) for detailed results.

A final question in this section asked libraries to share information about other improvements, policies, or protocols they are considering related to accessibility. Top trends emerging from the open-ended comments (n=331) include renovations to physical space, such as study rooms and furniture, the creation of sensory-friendly spaces and resources, and improvements to usability and accessibility of the library’s website, electronic resources, and online services. The comments highlight that improvement is an on-going process, and one that benefits from collaboration with partners across the institution.

Conclusion

The ACRL Trends and Statistics Survey provides the most current picture of the state of academic libraries in the United States. The overview of the 2024 findings presented in this report is intended to facilitate further exploration, research, and advocacy. Library staff can use this data to understand how their institution compares to peers, demonstrate the scope and value of library services, and make the case for additional resources to support its mission. Library researchers and stakeholders can use this data to understand how academic libraries as a whole serve higher education, including research and student success.

ACRL's annual survey is particularly critical given the retirement of the IPEDS Academic Libraries component after the 2024–25 collection.⁷ Institutions that participate in federal financial aid programs are required to complete the annual IPEDS survey, resulting in a response rate often exceeding 99%. Removal of the Academic Libraries component means loss of its comprehensive longitudinal data. While ACRL lacks the federal mandate or funding to fully replace this effort, the use of nonprobability sample weighting – as applied in 2024 for the first time – will enable us to provide the field with results that are representative of U.S. academic libraries. Participation in the Trends and Statistics Survey is voluntary, but it is more critical than ever to improve the accuracy of the data and its usefulness for peer comparisons.

Academic libraries and higher education institutions face considerable challenges, including attacks on intellectual freedom, funding and staffing cuts, and the rapidly changing technology and information landscape. While the data collected on the Trends and Statistics Survey cannot solve these problems, it equips the field with a foundation for evidence-based advocacy, planning, and continued innovation.

Notes

- 1 For more information on the survey and its history, see: ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics, <https://acrl.libguides.com/stats/surveyhelp>.
- 2 The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education posted a notice in March 2024 inviting open comments on proposed changes to IPEDS, including the planned elimination of the Academic Libraries component after FY 2024. Despite opposition, the proposal was approved. Department of Education, “Agency Information Collection Activities; Comment Request; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) 2024–25 Through 2026–27” (Docket No.: ED-2024-SCC-0040), Federal Register 89, no.43 (March 4, 2024): <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2024-04509>.
- 3 American Council on Education, “Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education,” 2021 Public Data File (January 17, 2023). Retrieved from <https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/>. While a 2025 vintage is now available, it involves significant changes to the classification system. This report retains use of the 2021 classifications, which are familiar and widely used. Analysis of the 2025 survey will adopt the new institution classifications.
- 4 Ratios reported reflect an aggregate, not an average. In this case, the student FTE per 1 library staff FTE ratio is calculated as the weighted sum of the total student FTE divided by the weighted sum of the total library staff FTE for institutions that reported both values. The result is 204 student FTE per 1 library staff FTE across all academic libraries. In mathematical terms, this is a generalized median or weighted median.
- 5 As in note 4, the percent of total reflects an aggregate, not an average. This allows us to say that *overall, 35.0% of total FTE staff in academic libraries are librarians*, but *on average, 46.5% of FTE staff at an institution are librarians*. The higher average value likely reflects the fact that there are more associate’s colleges (31% of the universe) and they employ a higher proportion of staff that are librarians. In taking the average proportion, those institutions bring the overall result up. However, while there are fewer doctoral universities (12.9% of the universe), they employ far larger numbers of staff including librarians, so in aggregate, the proportion of all academic library staff that are librarians is lower. Neither number is wrong, they simply tell us different things.
- 6 Unweighted, in 2024 dollars, mean total expenditures increased from \$4,068,588 in 2023 to \$4,337,259 in 2024. Median total expenditures increased from \$1,147,226 in 2023 to \$1,180,413 in 2024.
- 7 ACRL joined the American Library Association (ALA), the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), and the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) on two public comments ([May 2, 2024](#) and [June 24, 2024](#)) objecting to the proposed elimination of the Academic Libraries component from IPEDS. These comments summarize the value of the data, its uses, and what the field will lose with the elimination of this component.

Dive into the survey results and peer comparisons with Benchmark!

The Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey is hosted in Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends. The tool supports data-driven planning and advocacy in academic libraries. All libraries have *free* access to Benchmark to complete surveys and view your institution's past survey data and key metrics.



A Benchmark subscription provides *upgraded* access to custom peer comparisons, interactive data dashboards, and 100+ unique visualizations. Discover insights about your library's performance, demonstrate value to stakeholders, and increase your impact at your institution with Benchmark.

Learn more at librarybenchmark.org. If you need assistance logging into your library's account, please contact acrlbenchmark@ala.org.

Tables

The tables below contain detailed results across five simplified Carnegie classifications. Unless otherwise noted these results are *weighted* to be representative of all U.S. academic libraries. Unweighted results, where noted, reflect only respondents who completed the survey. See [Appendix A](#) for further details on the methodology and weighting.

To explore the results further and create custom peer comparisons, access the full dataset with a subscription to Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends (librarybenchmark.org).

Table 1. Staffing

Survey question: 6A. Total staff (FTE)

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Median	5.7	9.0	13.0	48.6	4.0	8.0
Mean	7.7	14.0	18.9	84.5	6.6	19.4
Margin of error for mean	1.8	2.0	1.8	10.7	1.3	2.2
Response count	315	300	306	339	106	1,366

Table 2. Students FTE per Library Staff FTE

Survey questions: 6A. Total staff (FTE); 90. Degree Seeking Full-time Equivalent (FTE)

Note: The ratio calculation includes only institutions that responded to both questions.

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Weighted	388	163	208	179	117	204
Unweighted	412	148	221	167	106	187
Response count	270	257	253	284	88	1,152

Table 3. Staff FTE by Type as Percent of Total

Survey questions: 1A. Librarians # of FTEs; 2A. Other professional staff # of FTEs; 4A. All Other Paid Staff (Except Student Assistants) # of FTEs; 5A. Student assistants # of FTEs

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Librarians	41.1%	33.9%	32.7%	32.9%	46.4%	35.0%
Other professional staff	10.8%	8.4%	8.8%	14.7%	9.8%	12.0%
All other paid staff	30.9%	22.1%	25.0%	30.4%	18.4%	27.6%
Student assistants	17.2%	35.5%	33.4%	22.0%	25.3%	25.4%

Table 4. Total Expenditures**Survey question:** 31. Total expenditures from all identifiable sources, excludes fringe

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Median	\$292,648	\$447,040	\$955,605	\$5,210,616	\$313,611	\$487,346
Mean	\$513,728	\$994,568	\$1,493,979	\$11,367,729	\$758,846	\$2,073,914
Margin of error for mean	\$122,307	\$147,209	\$167,314	\$1,686,065	\$208,021	\$286,603
Response count	315	300	306	339	106	1,366

Table 5. Expenditures by Type as Percent of Total

Survey questions: 1B. Librarians salaries and wages; 2B. Other professional staff salaries and wages; 4B. All other paid staff salaries and wages; 5B. Student assistants salaries and wages; 20. One-time purchases of books, serial backfiles, and other materials; 21. Ongoing commitments to subscriptions; 22. All other materials/services costs; 24. Preservation services; 25. All other operations and maintenance expenses.

Note: These results only include institutions that reported expenses in all three main categories (salaries and wages, materials/services, and operations/maintenance). Mean and median expenditures of each type are available in Benchmark.

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Staffing Expenses	75.0%	55.5%	53.9%	43.3%	47.0%	48.3%
1B. Librarians salaries and wages (excluding fringe)	45.8%	33.0%	30.0%	20.4%	32.8%	25.6%
2B. Other professional staff salaries and wages (excluding fringe)	9.2%	6.0%	6.7%	9.7%	5.7%	8.6%
4B. All other paid staff salaries and wages (excluding fringe)	18.2%	12.3%	13.1%	10.6%	6.2%	11.3%
5B. Student assistants salaries and wages (excluding fringe)	1.8%	4.2%	4.1%	2.6%	2.3%	2.9%
Materials Expenses	19.6%	36.5%	38.1%	45.6%	43.5%	41.7%
*20. One-time purchases of books, serial backfiles, and other materials	4.9%	5.2%	4.2%	8.2%	5.3%	7.0%
*21. Ongoing commitments to subscriptions	13.5%	29.4%	32.2%	35.7%	36.5%	33.1%
*22. All other materials/services costs	1.2%	1.8%	1.7%	1.7%	1.6%	1.7%
Operations and Maintenance Expenses	5.4%	8.0%	8.1%	11.2%	9.6%	9.9%
*24. Preservation services	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.8%	0.3%
*25. All other operations and maintenance expenses	5.4%	7.7%	7.9%	10.9%	8.7%	9.6%

Table 6. Library Collection Size**Survey questions:** 44A. Total physical collection; 44B. Total digital collection

Note: The percent of total results only include institutions that reported collections of both formats (including an entered response of 0).

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Physical Collection						
Median size	21,791	66,573	107,846	434,963	25,198	47,551
Mean size	31,106	130,051	175,154	1,206,587	53,973	214,680
Margin of error for mean	8,484	19,097	20,607	264,318	17,480	37,843
As percent of total	3.8%	13.3%	16.9%	41.1%	11.5%	20.4%
Digital Collection						
Median size	346,700	564,773	678,334	1,239,713	315,315	499,555
Mean size	783,269	845,553	860,525	1,788,446	413,702	844,527
Margin of error for mean	425,241	201,959	84,477	241,620	91,746	145,902
As percent of total	96.2%	86.7%	83.1%	58.9%	88.5%	79.6%
Response count	315	298	303	339	106	1,361

Table 7. Circulation**Survey questions:** 60. Total Physical Circulation; 61C. Total Digital Circulation; 62. Total Usage (Physical and Digital Circulation)

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Physical Circulation						
Median	1,232	2,150	2,882	11,686	941	1,890
Mean	81,206	4,679	5,321	22,098	2,971	30,391
As percent of total	16.5%	3.6%	1.6%	1.3%	3.7%	6.8%
Digital Circulation						
Median	31,235	40,085	92,792	528,844	17,775	44,559
Mean	410,078	114,868	331,803	1,709,946	75,406	419,597
As percent of total	83.5%	96.4%	98.4%	98.7%	96.3%	93.2%
Total Circulation						
Median	33,814	43,884	100,757	542,714	21,073	48,176
Mean	491,284	119,463	337,068	1,731,849	78,339	449,719
Margin of error for mean	331,509	28,172	185,432	513,193	33,896	125,428
Response count	315	300	304	339	106	1,364

Table 8. Circulation per Student FTE

Survey question: 62. Total usage (physical and digital circulation); 90. Degree-seeking full-time equivalent students

Note: The ratio of circulation to student FTE only includes institutions that responded to both questions.

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Circulation per Student	187	53	72	113	98	117
Response count	270	256	254	284	89	1,153

Table 9. Information Services to Individuals

Survey questions: 64. Transactions; 65. Consultations; 66. Transactions and Consultations if unable to report separately; 67. Virtual Reference Services

Note: Virtual reference may include both transactions and consultations and there may be overlap between the counts reported in question 67 and those reported in 64, 65, and 66.

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Total Transactions and Consultations						
Median	1,909	629	1,018	3,414	550	1,132
Mean	3,235	1,551	4,808	7,785	982	3,344
Margin of error for mean	760	357	5,380	1,336	276	1,043
Virtual Reference Transactions						
Median	90	109	289	1,269	92	210
Mean	500	453	789	3,076	529	881
Margin of error for mean	205	191	297	531	449	161
Response count	289	279	291	332	95	1,286

Table 10. Information Services to Individuals by Type

Survey questions: 64. Transactions; 65. Consultations; 66. Transactions and Consultations if unable to report separately

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Transactions	87.1%	64.8%	92.6%	64.5%	69.2%	79.1%
Transactions/Consultations	7.9%	25.6%	3.1%	26.2%	23.6%	14.3%
Consultations	5.0%	9.7%	4.3%	9.3%	7.2%	6.6%

Table 11. Group Presentations and Attendance

Survey questions: 74. Number of All Presentations to Groups (Include Synchronous and Asynchronous); 75. Total Attendance at All Presentations to Groups (Include Synchronous and Asynchronous)

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Number of presentations						
Median	53	51	73	291	24	54
Mean	246	104	146	468	105	198
Margin of error for mean	162	27	37	83	104	56
Total attendance						
Median	751	670	1,025	4,758	148	762
Mean	1,829	1,492	2,652	8,520	807	2,462
Margin of error for mean	417	326	963	1,217	370	307
Response count	315	300	304	339	106	1,364

Table 12. Presentations by Modality

Survey questions: 70A. Number of synchronous presentations – physical; 70B. Number of synchronous presentations – digital/electronic; 70C. Number of synchronous presentations – total (if unable to break apart); 72B. Number of asynchronous presentations – digital/electronic.

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Synchronous physical	20.6%	59.2%	49.1%	39.0%	22.7%	33.3%
Synchronous digital	3.1%	3.6%	11.4%	7.9%	8.2%	6.1%
Synchronous other	4.0%	14.2%	16.2%	31.7%	15.7%	15.4%
Asynchronous	72.4%	23.0%	23.3%	21.4%	53.5%	45.2%

Table 13. Attendance at Presentations by Modality

Survey questions: 71A. Total Attendance at All Synchronous Presentations – Physical; 71B. Total Attendance at All Synchronous Presentations – Digital/Electronic; 71C. Total Attendance at All Synchronous Presentations – Total (if unable to break apart); 73B. Total Attendance at All Asynchronous Presentations – Digital/Electronic

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Synchronous physical	42.3%	61.3%	44.2%	42.2%	30.1%	43.9%
Synchronous digital	4.6%	3.1%	6.8%	6.8%	7.7%	5.9%
Synchronous other	11.9%	24.3%	16.4%	35.2%	48.5%	26.0%
Asynchronous	41.2%	11.3%	32.6%	15.8%	13.7%	24.2%

Table 14. Gate Counts**Survey questions:** 79a. Gate Count on an Annual Basis; 79c. Gate Count in a Typical Week

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Annual gate count						
Median	23,068	64,104	86,003	325,983	9,932	48,306
Mean	50,759	96,391	137,324	566,477	32,698	142,993
Margin of error for mean	12,111	15,233	19,500	74,928	13,307	19,811
Gate count in a typical week						
Median	532	2,061	2,575	8,015	250	1,116
Mean	1,322	3,010	4,524	15,443	644	3,769
Margin of error for mean	412	583	716	5,560	259	859
Response count	309	296	303	335	102	1,345

Table 15. Annual Gate Count per Student FTE**Survey questions:** 79a. Gate Count on an Annual Basis; 90. Degree-seeking full-time equivalent students

Note: The ratio of annual gate count to student FTE only includes institutions that responded to both questions.

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Annual gate count per student FTE	17.6	38.5	33.0	34.9	32.2	30.9
Response count	199	176	204	240	61	880

Table 16. Physical Accommodations Outside the Library

Survey question: Which of the following physical accommodations are in place outside your main/central library to help individuals with disabilities access the facility?

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Accessible book / media drop box	67.9%	65.3%	73.0%	77.8%	59.7%	67.9%
Accessible main, public entrance	94.3%	89.4%	91.3%	93.4%	81.3%	90.2%
Accessible parking spaces with adjacent access aisle	78.9%	79.8%	80.3%	71.8%	78.3%	78.4%
Accessible path or sidewalk to entrance	97.2%	94.1%	95.5%	97.4%	96.0%	96.1%
Automatic doors	86.7%	80.3%	78.8%	96.4%	57.0%	79.5%
Other outside physical accommodations	6.3%	8.6%	8.2%	7.3%	7.6%	7.4%
Any yes	99.5%	99.3%	100.0%	99.3%	98.5%	99.3%
Response count	303	288	319	296	95	1,301

Table 17. Physical Accommodations Inside the Library

Survey question: Which of the following physical accommodations are in place inside your main/central library to help individuals with disabilities access the facility?

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Accessible bathrooms	85.5%	76.9%	82.1%	88.5%	75.3%	81.7%
Accessible furniture	93.2%	83.9%	91.5%	90.1%	80.0%	88.3%
Assistive listening devices or hearing loops	26.0%	16.6%	18.1%	28.3%	13.3%	20.7%
Braille signage or other assistance for low vision individuals	37.4%	37.5%	42.1%	58.1%	32.2%	39.7%
Elevator or chair lift (if applicable)*	90.4%	92.4%	94.4%	98.5%	83.4%	92.0%
Emergency alarms with both audible and visual indicators	88.2%	89.6%	83.3%	92.5%	73.3%	85.3%
Public computers with accessible technologies and software	71.8%	38.3%	42.9%	65.6%	30.3%	51.6%
Quiet space for people with sensory needs	67.3%	67.4%	69.8%	78.6%	73.7%	70.3%
Walkers, wheelchairs, or scooters for individuals with limited mobility	4.6%	2.3%	3.6%	12.6%	5.4%	5.1%

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Wheelchair-accessible hallways	94.2%	95.1%	95.9%	94.2%	92.8%	94.4%
Wheelchair-accessible stacks	74.7%	74.0%	72.6%	75.0%	71.7%	73.7%
Other inside physical accommodations	6.4%	14.6%	10.5%	13.5%	5.9%	9.4%
Any yes	99.7%	99.7%	100.0%	100.0%	98.9%	99.6%
Response count	305	284	319	295	92	1,295

* *Elevator or chair lift*: estimates reflect the proportion of respondents to whom this is applicable, i.e., the main/central library has a multi-floor building with stairs. Respondents that do not have multiple floors were instructed to select N/A.

Table 18. Accessibility Resources for Patrons in Programs/Classes

Survey question: What resources do you provide for patrons with disabilities who attend your programs or classes, either as a standard practice or upon request?

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
A program agenda or logistical details provided in advance	57.3%	46.5%	48.3%	54.3%	37.3%	49.5%
ASL interpretation or transcription	35.9%	20.1%	23.5%	33.7%	8.9%	25.3%
Extra space for moving around	74.3%	66.9%	70.9%	70.2%	61.7%	69.5%
Extra time to complete activities or assignments	80.3%	68.6%	67.0%	63.9%	67.1%	71.4%
Information presented in multiple formats	77.2%	65.4%	60.4%	70.6%	60.1%	68.0%
Multiple types of seating	75.8%	69.5%	69.0%	71.1%	64.4%	70.7%
Noise canceling headphones	49.8%	22.5%	23.8%	29.3%	15.3%	31.1%
Sensory-friendly resources	40.7%	33.0%	27.8%	29.4%	19.7%	31.7%
Other resources	10.6%	10.9%	10.5%	16.3%	5.1%	10.2%
Any yes	97.3%	92.7%	95.4%	94.2%	90.2%	94.3%
Response count	292	264	294	281	87	1,218

Table 19. Limitations to Improving Accessibility of Library Facilities

Survey question: Do any of the following limit your ability to improve the accessibility of facilities at your library?

	Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral	Other	All
Building(s) constructed before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990	53.2%	63.0%	63.6%	70.3%	50.5%	58.9%
Cost / budget	81.9%	88.3%	87.2%	82.5%	69.5%	82.1%
Lack of awareness among library staff about accessibility needs and best practices	14.0%	10.4%	18.1%	16.7%	20.0%	15.6%
Lack of awareness among stakeholders or community members	17.9%	19.7%	25.2%	17.5%	20.4%	20.2%
Library does not control or own the space it occupies	32.0%	25.4%	26.8%	22.4%	35.4%	29.0%
Limitations of current space (e.g., carpeting, stairs)	46.1%	58.5%	61.4%	60.6%	45.0%	53.3%
Organizational or leadership buy-in	24.7%	20.1%	17.6%	13.4%	17.1%	19.6%
Other	13.1%	12.1%	9.3%	12.4%	6.3%	10.8%
Response count	236	237	271	256	70	1,070

Appendix A: Methodology

Sample

1,386 institutions completed surveys out of 3,521 that were invited to participate for a final response rate of 39.4%. For US institutions only in 2024 the response rate is 39.5%. In 2023 the overall response rate was 43.2%, in 2022 the response rate was 44.5% and in 2021, 41%. The slightly lower rate in 2024 is due at least in part in an increase in the institutions invited to participate. ACRL staff worked to better align the survey sample with the IPEDS population of institutions with academic libraries, including many smaller institutions that had previously not been invited to participate due to incomplete information about their libraries.

Table A1 below shows how the respondents (institutions that completed the survey) compare to all institutions invited to participate (the full population). The majority of institutions invited are U.S. academic institutions with a valid IPEDS unit ID. While 56 international institutions were invited to participate based on past interest, only 19 completed the survey in 2024. By Carnegie classification, associate's colleges and other (special focus, four-year, tribal, and unclassified) institutions are underrepresented among respondents, while master's and doctoral universities are overrepresented. The use of nonprobability sample weights—as detailed below—corrects for nonresponse bias.

Table A1.

Institution type	Response rate	Completed		All institutions in sample	
		Count	% of total	Count	% of total
Associate's Colleges / 2-Year Institutions	28.9%	315	22.7%	1,090	31.0%
Baccalaureate Colleges	46.7%	300	21.6%	643	18.3%
Master's Colleges & Universities	49.4%	306	22.1%	619	17.6%
Doctoral Universities	74.7%	340	24.5%	455	12.9%
Other (special focus 4-year, tribal, not classified)	16.1%	106	7.6%	658	18.7%
International	33.9%	19	1.4%	56	1.6%
All Institutions	39.4%	1,386	100.0%	3,521	100.0%

Survey Design

The ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey is administered annually and is designed to gather information at the national level from all types of academic libraries. It took its current form in 2015, incorporating questions from the Academic Libraries component of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), a selection of measures previously collected on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Academic Libraries Survey, and a selection of questions about library trends that changes each year. The ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey Editorial Board develops the trends questions and works to revise the survey instrument as needed to align with IPEDS, reduce respondent burden, and better meet the needs of the field.

The main sections on the 2024 survey were: Reporting Structure; Staffing Types, FTEs, and Expenses; Expenses (Exclude Staff); Library Collections; Library Services; Local Characteristics; Other; Notes; 2024 Trends; and Accessibility. Changes from the prior year included:

- Removed question 7, number of hours to work per week to be considered “full time” at the institution.
- Moved questions 68 (number of branch and independent libraries), 79a (annual gate count), and 79c (gate count in a typical week) to the beginning of the survey in a new Library Characteristics section.

See the [ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics LibGuide](#) links to the 2024 survey instructions and worksheet.

The 2024 Trends and Statistics Survey opened on October 15, 2024, and closed on April 11, 2025. ACRL sent email invitations to all institutions in the sample, provided contact details are on file in Benchmark (not all may have received the message due to missing or outdated contact information). In addition, the survey was publicized via ACRL communications and the website. Several reminders were sent via email while the survey remained open. Responses were collected through ACRL’s data platform, Benchmark: Library Metrics and Trends (librarybenchmark.org).

Notes on Data Checks

ACRL took over administration of the annual surveys in-house in 2021. Since that time, staff have actively worked with members of the Academic Library Trends and Statistics Editorial Board to improve the quality of the data collected. This included regular checks of submitted responses to verify their completeness, correct or remove errors (e.g., negative values, outliers), and check questions with multiple reporting methods to minimize duplication or mismatched results. In 2024, these checks were completed by consultants from Activate Research Inc.

The questions about information services to individuals, information services to groups, and interlibrary loans all offer respondents the option of either reporting a single total or a more detailed breakdown. This is intended to give respondents maximum flexibility and account for different tracking methods used by different institutions. However, while the instructions specify that the single total should only be entered if unable to report separately, many respondents report both a total and a breakdown, and sometimes the sum of the numbers reported separately does not match the total. ACRL staff followed up with the responding institutions to request corrections where needed. For example, for information services to individuals, if an institution responded to *both* 64. Transactions and 65. Consultations *and* 66. Transactions and Consultations if unable to report separately, and if the sum of 64 plus 65 was equal to 66, then the value entered in 66 was removed to avoid duplication in the analysis.

Weighting

Weighting the survey data means that the results presented are representative of all U.S. academic libraries. It accounts for differences between the responding institutions and the population of all U.S. institutions with academic libraries. Without weights, results can only be said to reflect the respondents, and those respondents are not representative. In ACRL’s survey sample, doctoral universities tend to be overrepresented, while associate’s colleges tend to be underrepresented, as shown in Table A1 above. Unweighted results, therefore, are skewed by the larger, doctoral-granting institutions that respond at higher rates.

The ACRL Trends and Statistics Survey Editorial Board approved a proposal to weight the results to account for differences between responding institutions and all institutions starting with the 2024 survey year. This approach has been used by the Public Library Association for their [annual surveys](#) since 2021. All institutions with academic libraries are invited to participate in the survey and the use of nonprobability sample weighting corrects for differences between the sample and the full population as detailed below. Weighting the ACRL annual survey results will ensure that the academic library field has access to representative data after the elimination of the IPEDS Academic Library component (ALC). ACRL opted to start applying weights for the 2024 survey to test reliability and make refinements as needed while comprehensive IPEDS ALC data is still being collected through FY 2024.

The weighted results for 2024 are not directly comparable to previous years of ACRL data, which were unweighted. For this reason, the current report does not provide longitudinal analysis. Future reports, with multiple years of weighted data, will present results over time. Researchers conducting their analysis should consult the Benchmark resource, "[Weighted Results](#)."

Nonprobability Sample Weights

To calculate weights for the 2024 ACRL Academic Trends and Statistics Survey, because all academic institutions with libraries were invited to complete the survey and the response rate was 40 percent, nonprobability sample weighting was used to calculate final weights for responding institutions.¹ This quasi-randomization approach corrects for nonresponse bias—the sample differs from the rest of the population such that the results from the sample cannot be projected to the full population—by using a probability-based reference sample to estimate pseudo-inclusion probabilities for the responding institutions. In this case, the sample of responding institutions ($n = 1,363$) was combined with the reference sample of nonresponding institutions ($n = 2,029$). This combined sample covered the total population ($N = 3,392$) of institutions with academic libraries in the 2023 IPEDS sample that reported values for total expenditures and total FTE staff.

Weighting Procedure

Weights were assigned to 1,363 academic institutions that (1) responded to the survey and (2) had data in IPEDS. For a given responding institution, the final weight was calculated by:

1. Coding the institutions in the reference sample as 0 and responding institution as 1.
2. Assigning a probability sample weight to institutions in the reference sample ($w = N/n$) and the institutions that responded to the survey ($w = 1$).
3. Fitting a binary regression using the following institution characteristics to predict the probability of being in the sample of responding institutions. IPEDS variable names appear in parentheses:
 - HD2023_CARNEGIE_CLASSIFICATION_2021_BASIC (C21BASIC): The 2021 Basic Classification is an update of the traditional classification framework developed by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education in the early 1970s to support its research program. Each accredited, degree-granting U.S. institution is assigned to one of 33 classifications.

- HD2023_INSTITUTION_SIZE_CATEGORY (INSTSIZE): Each institution is assigned to one of five categories: Under 1,000; 1,000 – 4,999; 5,000 – 9,999; 10,000 – 19,999; 20,000 and above.
- HD2023_CONTROL_OF_INSTITUTION (CONTROL): A classification of whether an institution is operated by publicly elected or appointed officials or by privately elected or appointed officials and derives its major source of funds from private sources. Each institution is assigned to one of three categories: Private for-profit, Private not-for-profit, or Public.
- DRVEF2023_TOTAL_ENROLLMENT (ENRTOT): Total men and women enrolled for credit in the fall of the academic year.
- DRVHR2023_TOTAL_FTE_STAFF (SFTETOTL): Total FTE staff is the sum of all FTE staff by occupational category.
- DRVHR2023_LIBRARIANS_CURATORS_AND_ARCHIVISTS_FTE (SFTELCAI): Librarians, Curators, and Archivists FTE = Full-time Librarians, Curators, and Archivists (plus (1/3 of part-time Librarians, Curators, and Archivists). This category is based on the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification Manual from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- EXP_TOTAL: Total institution expenditures. In IPEDS, expenditures are reported under separate variables based on institution control. This calculated variable combines F2E131 (total expenses, private not-for-profit institutions), F3E071 (total expenses, private for-profit institutions), and F1C191 (total expenses, public institutions). Each single institution reports in only one of those categories.
- EXP_ACSUPPORT: Total academic support expenditures. In IPEDS, expenditures are reported under separate variables based on institution control. This calculated variable combines F2E041 (academic support, private not-for-profit institutions), F3E03A1 (academic support, private for-profit institutions), and F1C051 (academic support, public institutions).

4. Calculating the inverse probability for each institution that responded to the survey ($w_{np} = 1/P$).

An additional 23 academic institutions not represented in IPEDS were assigned a weight of 0 for a total number of 1,386 institutions in the analytic sample. Those 23 institutions include 4 U.S. institutions without valid current IPEDS identifiers, and 19 international institutions.

Estimate Precision. The IPEDS population-level data was used to check how effective weighting was for estimating mean values across several variables. For example, the mean total enrollment for all institutions was 5,467. Before weighting, the mean total enrollment in the sample of responding institutions was 8,567—higher in responding institutions than in the institution population. After weighting, the population estimate for the mean total enrollment was 4,991 ($se = 305.39$)—closer to the population mean. These results indicate that the weights were effective in reducing nonresponse bias.

Margin of Error. The margin of error is included for the weighted mean in select tables. It reflects how precise the estimates are and is calculated based on a 95% confidence interval. In other words, we are 95% certain that the true population value lies between the upper and lower limit of the confidence intervals. This range can be represented using the margin of error and is calculated by multiplying the standard error by the z-score (1.96) associated with a 95% confidence interval. For example, the weighted mean for the total staff FTE

(question 6A) is 19.43 with a margin of error of +/- 2.22. This means we are 95% certain that the population value (the average total staff FTE) lies between 17.21 and 21.65.

Appendix Notes

- 1 R. Valliant, J.A. Dever & F. Kreuter, *Practical Tools for Designing and Weighting Survey Samples* (Springer, 2018): <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-93632-1>.