

**LIBRARYJOURNAL**. presents

# The Future of the Academic Library

## A Symposium: **Bridging the Gaps**

The current outlook for academic libraries is mixed. On any given day academic librarians may be full of enthusiasm for a glorious professional future or they might envision some crisis that foretells our imminent demise. We may lack certainty about where things are headed and how they'll look when we get there, but where we find common ground is in our belief that we need to work together as a profession to move forward into the future. To accomplish this we will need to overcome our misperceptions and stereotypes about our colleagues and our users. There are multiple gaps between where we are and where need to be to get to our preferred future. Together we must establish the means to transcend our differences and bridge these gaps.

Join your colleagues on Friday, November 11 for *Library Journal's* second **Future of the Academic Library Symposium** at Temple University in Philadelphia. Engage in conversation with a stellar gathering of academic librarians who will share their ideas and solutions-and how they are leading within their organizations-to create dynamic, future-proof academic libraries.

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### **MORNING PROGRAM—BRIDGING THE CULTURE GAP**

Within our academic libraries we often find ourselves focusing more on our differences than the commonalities that serve as the thread of our organizational fabric. Trust is the foundation of successful teams. To build trust we must establish a culture of mutual understanding. How can we improve on identifying the gaps in our culture? We can begin with a conversation to identify and promote our shared values, the root of any culture. Our morning facilitators and panelists will address multiple culture gaps—leadership; generational; status; competency; engagement.

#### **Segment One—Innovation: Freedom vs. Control**

Achieving sustainable academic libraries requires innovation. New tools, new discoveries, and new skills that create value for our community members are all essential to the future of our academic libraries. The challenge lies in resolving the inherent tension between empowering staff to explore and create while maintaining the necessary administrative control to keep processes and people in check. Library administrators and frontline librarians must work together to establish a workplace that promotes an innovation culture. The differences between the two need not be an insurmountable barrier to progress.

#### **Segment Two—People: Strengthening the Culture**

“Why can’t my colleagues tolerate change?” “Don’t these new librarians realize how we do things here?” “How come the deadwood always rejects my great ideas?” “Technology? That’s the new librarian’s job.” Our academic libraries can become fraught with misunderstanding and stereotypes about our colleagues, and when the gaps grow wide they lead to organizational dysfunction. To build better libraries we must confront these gaps. Doing so requires that we engage in authentic conversation focused on creating a better understanding of each other. Once we learn to appreciate our differences, and how our organizations thrive from the mix of skills we bring to it, we can begin to bridge the culture gap.

### **AFTERNOON PROGRAM—BRIDGING THE USER GAP**

This is the age of user expectation. If our academic libraries fail to meet those expectations we risk losing our community members to information sources that do a better job—whether that means greater simplicity, deeper comprehensiveness, more convenience or faster response times. That’s why there is far greater interest in designing better library user experiences. But how and where do we begin to fill the gap between the experience we offer to our user community members and the experience they expect from us. Our afternoon is devoted to an exploration of academic library users. The intent is to engage them in conversation to better understand how our contemporary library experience delights or fails them, and what strategies we might employ to get the experience right.