

**Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program:  
Community College Librarians and the ACRL Framework**

**Statement of Broad Need**

Queensborough Community College (QCC) of The City University of New York (CUNY) seeks funding from the Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program for an exploration of the continuing education needs of community college librarians (CCLs) as related to their teaching skills and the recently adopted Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (*Framework*). This application, titled *Community College Librarians and the ACRL Framework*, requests \$21,840 in support and designates itself as a Community Anchor (Project Category), Continuing Education (Project Type) and Planning Grant (Funding Category) project.

Over ten million students attend community colleges in the United States; a disproportionate percentage come from underrepresented populations and over two-thirds are underprepared for higher education (Bailey, Smith Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015). Information literacy (IL) instruction is delivered to these students by CCLs; as the premier association of higher education librarians, CCLs look to ACRL for direction and guidance to inform their teaching practices.

In January 2016, ACRL replaced its *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* with the *Framework*. Though the *Framework* is intended for use by all types of higher education institutions, community colleges face unique academic challenges relative to four-year colleges and universities; these challenges may impact CCLs' ability to integrate the new document into their instructional work. According to Reed (2015), "For librarians who work with students on advanced research and high-level projects, the *Framework* will feel like a natural fit, whereas those who focus the great amount of their time on introductory concepts may struggle to see much relevance" (p. 237). This project seeks to improve that fit between community colleges and the *Framework*, a fit which broadly impacts community college students, faculty, administrators and librarians. To date, no studies have been published on the self-reported knowledge, attitude and behavior of CCLs toward the *Framework*. This project seeks to close that gap and to address three research questions:

RQ1: How do CCLs describe their understanding of the ACRL *Framework*?

RQ2: How do CCLs describe their current use of the ACRL *Framework* in IL instruction?

RQ3: How do CCLs describe their confidence level in incorporating the ACRL *Framework* into IL instruction?

**Project Design**

This mixed-methods study will be accomplished within a 12-month time frame (July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019) and will follow an Explanatory Sequential Research Design (Creswell, 2013), with quantitative data then qualitative data gathered from two national populations of CCLs. Quantitative data will be collected via a survey distributed to ACRL's Community and Junior College Libraries' Section (CJCLS) membership listserv. Qualitative data will be collected through semi-structured interviews of 15-20 CCLs conducted by the Project Director (PD) at two national library events: 2019 ALA Midwinter Meeting (January 2019, Seattle WA) and 2019 ACRL Conference (April 2019, Cleveland OH). Interview subjects will be recruited from registered conference attendees, via a solicitation sent to ACRL and CJCLS membership listservs. Each 60-minute, face-to-face interview will be audio recorded, and all recordings will be professionally transcribed. The PD and a Graduate Student Research Assistant (GSRA) will code interview transcripts using a grounded theory approach, and then systematically analyze the results for emergence of themes (Charmaz, 2014).

Susan Wengler, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Information Literacy at QCC, will serve as PD; she will manage all aspects of the project's planning, execution, completion and reporting. A GSRA will be recruited from the Master of Library Science program at Queens College of CUNY and participate in the processing and evaluation of data. Grant administrative obligations will be overseen by appropriate QCC and CUNY staff.

Three national academic librarianship leaders have agreed to serve on the project's Advisory Board: Craig Gibson (Professor, The Ohio State University Libraries, Columbus OH and co-author of the *Framework*), Debra Gilchrist, Ph.D. (Vice President for Learning and Student Success, Pierce College, Lakewood WA) and Marie Radford, Ph.D. (Professor of Library and Information Science, Rutgers University, New Brunswick NJ). The board will provide guidance throughout the project, including a review of survey and interview questions and a discussion of survey and interview results.

## Diversity Plan

Numerous enrollment and completion statistics published by the Community College Research Center at Teachers College of Columbia University (n.d.) speak to the diversity and needs of the community college student population, including:

- *Enrollment by income*: 44% of low-income students attend community colleges as their first college after high school (2002-06)
- *Enrollment by race and ethnicity*: 56% of Hispanic undergraduates and 44% of Black undergraduates were enrolled at community colleges, as compared to 39% of White undergraduates (Fall 2014)
- *Completion by income*: 14% of low-income students who started at a public community college completed an associate degree in six-years; 15% earned a bachelor's degree and 6% earned a certificate (2003-04)
- *Completion by race and ethnicity*: For students who started at a community college, 45.1% of White students, 43.8% of Asian students, 33% of Hispanic students and 25.8% of Black students completed a college credential in six-years (2010-2016)

Additionally, recruiting survey participants and interview subjects through a division (ACRL) and a section (CJCLS) of the 56,603-member ALA organization ("ALA Annual Membership Statistics") will create an opportunity for diverse representation of community college campuses by setting, size and state.

## Broad Impact

The intended result of this planning project is to identify the potential continuing education needs of CCLs as related to their teaching practices and the *Framework*. Findings of this needs assessment may result in future Program Grant applications and the development and implementation of CCL cohort training programs and/or online learning modules. This study does not aspire to challenge or revise the *Framework* on behalf of CCLs; rather it hopes to examine current CCL practices and to engage CCLs in the *Framework* discussion.

This project also expects to contribute to the fields of community college pedagogy, information literacy, and information and library science; results will be disseminated to national audiences through conference presentation and peer-reviewed publication. The PD will submit a presentation proposal regarding the study's preliminary findings to the 2019 ALA Conference (June 2019, Washington D.C.). And the PD will prepare an article manuscript based on the project and submit to peer-reviewed journals in the following order: *College & Research Libraries*, *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, and *Community & Junior College Libraries*.

## Budget Summary

The \$21,840 budget will be used to pay for the following project-related expenses: \$4,374-GSRA salary/fringe; \$311-Dedoose.com subscription; \$3,600-transcription fees; \$4,500-Advisory Board honorariums; \$300-survey participant incentives; \$1,000-interview subject incentives; \$4,200-travel related to interview data collection; \$1,600-travel related to conference presentation of preliminary findings; and \$1,955-indirect costs (44.7% of salary/fringe).

## References

- "ALA Annual Membership Statistics." *American Library Association*, <https://tinyurl.com/y8rgzmso>  
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- Bailey, T.R., Smith Jaggars, S., & Jenkins, D. (2015) *Redesigning America's community colleges: A clearer path to student success*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Community College Research Center. (n.d.) *Community college FAQs*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/mturhch>
- Creswell, J. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, 4th edition. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Reed, K. L. (2015). Square peg in a round hole? The Framework for Information Literacy in the community college environment. *Journal of Library Administration*, 55(3), 235-248.