



LAURA BUSH 21st CENTURY LIBRARIAN PROGRAM

Sample Application RE-260214-OLS-26
Project Category: National Implementation

Syracuse University

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$281,594
Amount of cost share: \$0

Syracuse University, in partnership with the University of Virginia, Colorado State University, and the University of Denver, will train 110 academic librarians to support student learning in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The project addresses multiple challenges, namely that students increasingly begin research with AI-generated answers and lack critical evaluation skills, institutions deploy AI-augmented learning analyses that exclude library data, and library leaders lack frameworks for communicating library value when campus administrators rely on AI-generated analyses for decision-making. These challenges emerged rapidly between 2022-2025 and demand systematic workforce preparation that does not yet exist. The project will implement a three-track, dual-cohort, train-the-trainer model over three years, with individualized focus on instruction librarians, assessment librarians, and library administrators.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the most recent Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.

Student Success through Assessment and AI Literacy in Libraries (SSAAILL)

INTRODUCTION

In support of **IMLS LB21 Program Goal 2** (train and retain current library and archives professionals, faculty, and staff) and **Objective 2.1** (develop or enhance professional development and training programs to enable the library and archival workforce to meet the needs of their communities), Syracuse University requests **\$295,894** from IMLS for SSAAILL (Student Success through Assessment and AI Literacy in Libraries), a three-year National Implementation grant. In partnership with the University of Virginia, Colorado State University, and the University of Denver, SSAAILL will train 110 academic librarians and library leaders through a three-track, dual-cohort, train-the-trainer model to transform how libraries support student learning in the age of artificial intelligence.

The convergence of three AI-driven shifts creates emergent challenges and opportunities for academic libraries.

First, students increasingly begin their academic inquiry with AI-generated answers rather than library searches, a transition Lo describes as a shift from "search first" to "answer first" (2026). Without critical evaluation skills, students risk building their learning on unvetted, potentially flawed AI outputs (challenge). Librarians prepared to support AI literacy can help students learn to critique AI outputs and use AI effectively (opportunity). Second, institutions are deploying AI-augmented learning analysis to understand and improve student success at scale (Robert & McCormack, 2025), yet library contributions to student learning remain largely invisible in these systems (challenge) (Oakleaf, 2018). Librarians who have the capacity to contribute to these institutional learning analyses and leverage them to work collaboratively with campus partners are centrally positioned to maintain their ability to support student success (opportunity). Third, institutional leaders are increasingly relying on AI-supported analyses to inform decisions, plan for the future, and allocate resources (challenge) (AAC&U & Elon, 2024). Library leaders who can use AI to bolster the value proposition of their libraries are better able to advocate for libraries, library personnel, and financial resources (opportunity). These parallel developments in AI fundamentally alter libraries' role in student learning and require academic librarians to answer three key questions:

1. How can librarians equip students with the critical thinking skills to evaluate and build upon AI responses?
2. How can libraries contribute meaningful evidence about their impact on student learning to institutional AI-enabled analyses?
3. How can library leaders leverage AI developments to communicate the value proposition of academic libraries to campus stakeholders, decision-makers, and resource-allocators?

SSAAILL addresses these challenges through three specialized training tracks, each offered twice over the grant project period, to support iterative improvement across cohorts. Each track directly focuses on enhancing library support for student learning and success as described below and illustrated in Figure 1:

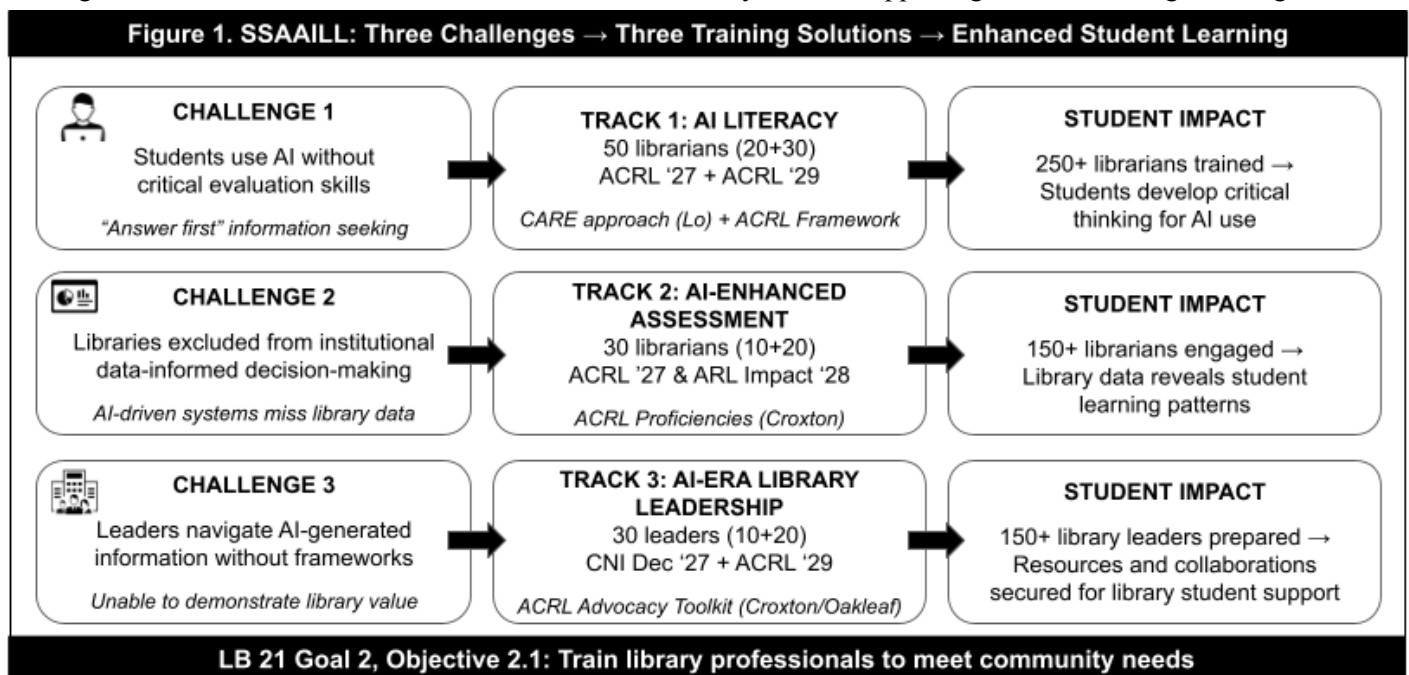
- **Track 1 - AI Literacy** (50 participants across 2 cohorts): Participants will learn to teach students critical AI literacy using Lo's CARE approach (Classify, Assess, Review, Enhance) and the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) AI Competency Framework for Academic Libraries as a foundation (ACRL, 2025). Each SSAAILL participant will train at least 5 instruction and public services colleagues and implement student-facing programming that equips learners to evaluate and use AI effectively, supporting academic success and post-graduate readiness. Cohort 1 (20 participants) will train at ACRL 2027; Cohort 2 (30 participants) at ACRL 2029, with Cohort 1 contributing implementation insights and co-facilitating elements of the workshop. These 50 participants will each teach 5 colleagues at their home institution/consortia, amplifying impact to 250 librarians over the span of the project.
- **Track 2 - AI-Enhanced Assessment** (30 participants across 2 cohorts): Participants will learn to leverage AI tools in assessing student learning and in contributing library data to institutional learning analytics initiatives, building on the ACRL Proficiencies for Assessment Librarians and Coordinators (ACRL, 2023a - Croxton (lead), Oakleaf (contributor)) and the Elsevier Foundation/ACRL Future Libraries pilot (ALA, 2025 - Lo, lead). Each cohort

participant will engage at least 5 colleagues in projects that make library contributions to student learning visible and actionable within institutional student success frameworks. Cohort 1 (10 participants) will train at ACRL 2027; Cohort 2 (20 participants) at ARL IMPACT 2028, with Cohort 1 sharing lessons learned and implementation experiences. These 30 project participants will train 150 more colleagues.

- **Track 3 - AI-Era Library Leadership** (30 participants across 2 cohorts): Participants will develop skills to advocate for academic libraries and communicate the value of library contributions to student learning in the AI era, drawing on frameworks from the ACRL Library Advocacy Toolkit (ACRL, 2023b - Croxton (lead), Oakleaf (contributor)). Each cohort participant will prepare at least 5 associate deans, department heads, or directors at their institutions/consortia to advocate effectively with campus leaders. Cohort 1 (10 participants) will train at CNI December 2027; Cohort 2 (20 participants) at ACRL 2029. These 30 project participants will teach 150 additional leaders.

All three tracks connect through their focus on library contributions to student learning. Track 1 focuses on how students learn with AI; Track 2 on how libraries contribute evidence about student learning and success; Track 3 on how leaders communicate this value to institutional stakeholders and beyond. An Undergraduate Student Advisory Group, representing diverse backgrounds and perspectives, will provide essential input on curricula and practices across all three tracks to ensure student perspectives inform library responses to AI.

All together, this train-the-trainer model will reach an estimated 550+ librarians at 110+ institutions through direct training, institutional cascade, and ongoing community-of-practice webinars. Trainings will take place in tandem with major library conferences (ACRL 2027 and 2029, CNI December 2027, ARL IMPACT 2028) to leverage existing professional travel patterns and support cohort networking. The dual-cohort model enables continuous improvement as lessons from initial implementations inform refinements for subsequent cohorts. Deliverables include curricula for each track, implementation toolkits, case studies of institutional adoption, evaluation reports demonstrating impact on student learning outcomes, and a suite of web-based resources on library roles in supporting student learning in the age of AI.



PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

The Need: A Triple Threat to Library Support of Student Learning

Academic libraries face a convergence of AI-driven changes that fundamentally alter their capacity to support student learning and success. These shifts emerged rapidly between 2022-2025 and now demand systematic workforce preparation that does not yet exist.

Shift 1: Students' "Answer First" Information Seeking. OpenAI's analysis of ChatGPT usage shows that explanation- and information-seeking now dominate user behavior, with millions of individuals using these tools daily for their work (Chatterji et al., 2025). Students increasingly begin academic inquiry by asking AI systems for explanations rather than searching library resources, a shift from “search first” to “answer first” (Lo, 2026). By the time they arrive at reference desks or instruction sessions, many students have already encountered AI-generated explanations that shape their sense of what is relevant, accurate, or complete. Early research confirms this shift's impact. Meakin (2024) reported declining reliance on traditional search tools among higher education students, while Wetzel and Kani (2024) observed that students often view AI outputs as authoritative unless explicitly taught verification skills. Yet most academic librarians lack structured frameworks to help students evaluate AI-generated answers, verify claims with scholarly sources, or recognize when AI outputs are incomplete, biased, or flawed. This gap is particularly concerning for students from populations with less access to informal mentoring about academic information practices.

Shift 2: Institutional Learning Analyses Exclude Library Contributions. Simultaneously, institutions are deploying AI-augmented learning analyses at scale to understand student success patterns and target interventions. These systems integrate data from learning management systems, early alert systems, and student information systems, but they rarely include library data (Oakleaf, 2018). According to EDUCAUSE research (Parnell et al., 2018), 68% of institutions now use learning analytics for student success initiatives, yet evidence of inclusion of library data in institutional learning analytics is scant, or perhaps nonexistent (Beile et al., 2020; Gujju et al., 2024). As a result, library contributions to student learning remain largely invisible within the data ecosystems that inform institutional decision-making, including student success strategies, resource allocation, and strategic priorities. Institutions increasingly turn to large-scale and AI-augmented analyses of what helps and what hurts student success journeys, yet most academic librarians have limited training in contributing library data to institutional systems or in using AI tools to analyze relationships between library engagement and student outcomes. This exclusion perpetuates libraries' marginalization from institutional conversations about student success at a time when data-informed decision-making is central to institutional planning.

Shift 3: Leaders Navigate Institutional AI-Generated Information About Student Success that Excludes Library Engagement. Campus leaders increasingly encounter AI-generated analyses, reports, and recommendations in their decision-making processes. A recent survey of 134 higher education administrators revealed that 84% were enthusiastic (34%) or very enthusiastic (50%) about using AI for data, reporting, and analytics, yet 89% lack frameworks for AI usage in higher education administration (Whitehead, 2024). Presidents, provosts, and other administrators use AI tools to analyze institutional data, generate strategic options, and communicate with stakeholders, yet few have guidance for interpreting or validating these results or noting the omissions they entail. Library deans and directors must navigate a landscape dominated by analyses silent on library contributions while communicating the library's value proposition and advocating for resources. This gap makes it difficult for library leaders to participate effectively in campus-level planning and resource discussions shaped by AI-generated evidence.

HOW THIS PROJECT BUILDS ON EXISTING WORK

SSAAILL adapts and scales four frameworks to create workforce training that does not currently exist:

- **Track 1 builds directly on Lo's CARE approach** (Classify, Assess, Review, Enhance), which provides a structured method for engaging AI-generated answers (Lo, 2026). The CARE framework treats AI outputs as texts requiring interpretation, an extension of information literacy instruction that academic librarians are well-positioned to teach. SSAAILL will transform this scholarly model into a train-the-trainer curriculum, enabling 50 instruction librarians to teach CARE to colleagues and implement student-facing programming. This work aligns with the **ACRL AI Competency Framework for Academic Libraries** (ACRL, 2025), which identifies essential competencies. SSAAILL creates the training infrastructure needed to implement these and other relevant frameworks.
- **Track 2 builds on the ACRL Proficiencies for Assessment in Academic Libraries** (ACRL, 2023a - Croxton (lead), Oakleaf (contributor)) and lessons from the **Elsevier Foundation/ACRL Future Libraries pilot** (ALA, 2025 - Lo, lead), which demonstrated the importance of academic librarians' capacity to use AI tools for assessment and

highlighted the need for systematic skill development and institutional positioning. SSAILL will prepare 30 assessment and systems librarians to use AI-enhanced assessment, contribute library data to institutional systems, and train colleagues in these practices. This work directly responds to gaps identified in prior IMLS-funded initiatives, including the Library Integration in Institutional Learning Analytics (LIILA) white paper (Oakleaf, 2018) and Connecting Libraries and Learning Analytics for Student Success (CLLASS) (Oakleaf et al., 2020), which found that librarians want to contribute to institutional analyses of student learning and success, but lack training, technical frameworks, and campus partnerships to do so effectively in an AI-augmented environment.

- **Track 3 addresses a critical gap** in library leadership development: communicating library value in an AI-augmented decision environment. Existing advocacy resources, including the **ACRL Library Advocacy Toolkit** (ACRL, 2023b; led by Croxton, with Oakleaf as a key contributor), do not address the specific challenge of articulating library contributions to student learning as institutional leaders increasingly rely on AI-generated analyses and dashboards. As a result, leaders often lack guidance on how to frame library contributions to student learning in ways that align with AI-enhanced analytics systems or how to prepare other campus leaders to do the same. Building on Levine-Clark's expertise in strategic library leadership and his extensive work with national library organizations and publisher advisory boards, SSAILL will prepare 30 library administrators to translate library contributions into evidence-based narratives that resonate within AI-driven planning environments and to train additional leaders in these strategies. Track 3 also draws on established **advocacy frameworks**, including ACRL's Academic Library Impact report (ACRL, 2017), the Academic Library Value: Impact Starter Kit (Oakleaf, 2018), the Academic Library Advocacy Toolkit (ACRL, 2023b), and the broader library value literature, adapting these approaches to contexts where institutional leaders regularly encounter AI-generated information and where qualitative narratives about library value must be supplemented with quantitative evidence visible in institutional analytics systems.

WHO WILL BENEFIT

- **Direct beneficiaries** include 110 academic librarians who will receive intensive training, plus the estimated 550+ colleagues they will train through the cascade model. These librarians will gain immediately applicable skills that will enhance their work supporting student learning and success: instruction librarians will teach students to critically evaluate AI; assessment librarians will contribute library data to institutional student success efforts; and library leaders will advocate more effectively for resources that sustain learning support. Participants will represent diverse institution types and geographic regions to ensure models work across contexts. The dual-cohort structure means that each second cohort benefits from refinements from earlier implementations, strengthening training across the project period.
- **Students** are the ultimate beneficiaries. When instruction librarians implement CARE-based AI literacy programming, students gain critical thinking skills that support academic success and workforce readiness. Research demonstrates that students with strong information literacy and critical evaluation skills achieve higher grades, persist at higher rates, and report greater confidence in their academic abilities (Bowles-Terry, 2012; Croxton & Moore, 2020; Soria et al., 2013, 2017). When assessment librarians make library contributions visible in institutional systems, campus leaders can make better-informed decisions that support student success, particularly for underserved student populations whose needs may be obscured in aggregated data. When library leaders communicate value, they secure resources that sustain and enhance learning support. **By centering student learning across all three tracks, SSAILL ensures that professional development translates directly into enhanced student success outcomes.**
- **Institutions** benefit from librarians prepared to contribute to institutional priorities in the AI era: AI literacy education, institutional learning analyses, and evidence-informed strategic planning for student success. At a time when campuses struggle to respond to AI's rapid integration into teaching and learning, SSAILL positions libraries as essential partners, reinforcing libraries' role as institutional "community anchors."
- **The profession** will benefit from freely available training curricula, implementation toolkits, and case studies that equip other institutions to adapt SSAILL approaches to their contexts. Iterative refinement between cohorts will

produce increasingly effective materials, and documenting lessons learned will help other libraries avoid common pitfalls while building on successful strategies.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

Project Management and Leadership

- **Dr. Megan Oakleaf (PI)** will provide overall project direction, manage partner collaboration, oversee evaluation, lead dissemination efforts, and co-develop and co-facilitate training across all tracks and cohorts. Oakleaf contributes over 20 years of experience in academic library assessment and has successfully managed three prior IMLS grants (RAILS, LILA, CLLASS), demonstrating expertise in multi-institution collaboration, train-the-trainer models, and rigorous evaluation. She has also served as an advisory board member or content expert on 10 additional IMLS grants since 2011. As Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Syracuse University's School of Information Studies and author of influential work on library value and assessment, she will ensure SSAAILL integrates scholarly rigor with practice. Her prior experience with train-the-trainer models in RAILS will directly inform SSAAILL implementation.
- **Dr. Leo Lo** (University of Virginia, Dean of Libraries and Advisor to the Provost for AI Literacy) will lead Track 1 curriculum development and co-facilitate training for both cohorts. As immediate past president of ACRL (2024-2025) and chair of the ACRL Task Force on AI Competencies for Library Workers, Lo brings national leadership visibility and deep expertise in AI literacy. His CARE approach (Lo, 2026) provides the pedagogical foundation for Track 1, and his experience giving over 100 presentations on AI literacy internationally positions him to effectively train instruction librarians. His forthcoming book "AI and the Future Workforce: A Reskilling Guide for Academic Libraries" further demonstrates his expertise in preparing library professionals for AI-augmented environments (ACRL, in press). Lo directs the University of Virginia Library's AI Literacy and Action Lab, which provides institutional context and infrastructure for his work on AI literacy programming and serves as a venue for developing and testing AI literacy approaches with library practitioners.
- **Dr. Becky Croxton** (Colorado State University, Strategic Assessment Librarian) will lead Track 2 curriculum development and co-facilitate training with the PI. With a PhD in educational studies, including a doctoral minor in educational research methods, Croxton brings expertise in assessment methodology, quantifying library value, and practical application. She spearheaded the ACRL Proficiencies for Assessment Librarians and Coordinators (2023a) and led development of the ACRL Library Advocacy Toolkit (2023b), positioning her to prepare librarians to use AI in assessment, contribute to institutional learning analytics, and communicate library value. Her practice and research on library strategic analytics, data visualization, and data storytelling (Croxton & Moore, 2020; Scoulas et al., 2025; Smith et al., 2025) inform her approach to helping librarians translate assessment data into institutional narratives.
- **Michael Levine-Clark** (University of Denver, Dean of Libraries) will lead Track 3 curriculum development and co-facilitate training with the PI. Levine-Clark's leadership roles (chair of the GWLA Board of Directors, member of the OCLC Global Council and chair of the Americas Regional Council, and chair of the Rosemont Shared Print Alliance Executive Committee), along with service on 20+ publisher and vendor advisory boards, give him broad insight into communicating effectively with presidents, provosts, trustees, and external funders. His extensive publications on library collections, scholarly communication, and collaboration demonstrate his expertise in articulating library value to diverse audiences.

Advisory Board

A six-member advisory board will meet virtually twice per year to provide consultation, review progress, and offer feedback on curricula and implementation. Members represent expertise in AI literacy and instruction, assessment and learning analytics, and library leadership and value communication. They include: Andrew Pace (Executive Director of ARL), Keith Webster (Dean, Carnegie Mellon University Libraries), JungMi Scoulas (Associate Professor, University of Illinois-Chicago Libraries), Michael Flierl (AI Faculty Fellow, Ohio State University Libraries), Jackie Belanger (Director of Assessment and Planning, University of Washington Libraries), and Gwen Evans (Lead Consultant, Return on Investment and Impact as a Service (IaaS)).

Stakeholder Engagement Through Student Advisory Group

A Student Advisory Group (SAG) of six undergraduate students will ensure student voices shape SSAILL's curricula and practices across all three tracks. Students will be recruited to represent diverse backgrounds, academic disciplines, and class years, with intentional outreach to first-generation students, students from minoritized backgrounds, students with disabilities, and students from community colleges or institutions serving diverse populations. The SAG will meet virtually twice per semester (fall and spring) for 90-minute sessions over three years and receive a \$250/semester stipend.

The SAG will review draft curricula, provide feedback on the relevance and accessibility of materials for diverse learners, identify gaps in addressing students' actual AI use patterns, advise on which library data meaningfully reflect student learning, and inform privacy and ethics considerations related to student data in institutional learning analyses. Members will also participate in pilot testing of instructional resources. SAG input will be integrated into all training materials and documented in project reports. The semester-based stipend structure accommodates student schedules and supports smooth transitions when students graduate or circumstances change, sustaining student voice throughout the project.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The project encompasses three parallel tracks, each with two cohorts trained sequentially to enable iterative improvement based on initial implementation experiences.

- **Year 1 (September 2026 - August 2027)** focuses on curriculum development and launching Cohorts 1 for Tracks 1 and 2. The PI, Lo, and Croxton will develop curricula for Tracks 1 and 2 in fall 2026, incorporating feedback from the SAG and advisory board. Participant recruitment and selection for both tracks will occur in late fall 2026 and early winter 2027, prioritizing diversity of institution types, geographic locations, and participant demographics. In early 2027, Lo will conduct a practitioner feedback session with instruction librarians at the University of Virginia Libraries to pilot test Track 1 curriculum and refine materials based on practitioner input before the ACRL 2027 training. Track 1 benefits from pilot testing through UVA's AI Literacy and Action Lab infrastructure; lessons from this pilot process will inform development approaches for Tracks 2 and 3. In April 2027, Track 1 Cohort 1 (20 instruction librarians) and Track 2 Cohort 1 (10 assessment/systems librarians) will train at ACRL 2027 in Portland through intensive one-day workshops covering track-specific content, train-the-trainer techniques, implementation planning, and assessment. Following training, participants will implement at their institutions with support from biannual webinars (fall and spring). Also in fall 2026, the PI, Levine-Clark, and Croxton will begin developing the Track 3 curriculum. The advisory board will meet twice (fall and spring) to review curricula and progress.
- **Year 2 (September 2027–August 2028)** focuses on supporting Year 1 cohorts, refining Tracks 1 and 2 based on Cohort 1 experiences, and preparing Track 2 Cohort 2. Track 1 and Track 2 Cohort 1 participants will continue implementation with biannual webinars. In December 2027, **Track 3 Cohort 1 (10 library administrators)** will train at a CNI meeting through a one-day workshop; Track 3 Cohort 1 will begin implementation following its December 2027 training. The PI and Croxton will refine the Track 2 curriculum based on Cohort 1 feedback and implementation reports. In July 2028, Track 2 Cohort 2 (20 assessment/systems librarians) will train at ARL IMPACT in Seattle, with Cohort 1 members sharing lessons learned. Curriculum refinement for Track 1 Cohort 2 and Track 3 Cohort 2 will continue throughout the year. The SAG will provide ongoing input, and the advisory board will meet twice to review refinements.
- **Year 3 (September 2028–August 2029)** focuses on delivering refined curricula to Cohorts 2 for Tracks 1 and 3, synthesizing learning across all cohorts, and conducting comprehensive evaluation. All active cohorts will continue biannual webinars with increasing cross-track integration. In April 2029, Track 1 Cohort 2 (30 instruction librarians) will train at ACRL 2029, with Cohort 1 members presenting implementation experiences and co-facilitating portions of the workshop. Also in April 2029, Track 3 Cohort 2 (20 library administrators) will train at ACRL 2029 through a separate one-day workshop. Following these trainings, new cohorts will begin implementation while earlier cohorts continue community-of-practice engagement. The PI will synthesize evaluation data from all six cohorts and prepare

the final report. The advisory board will meet twice to review outcomes and dissemination plans, and the SAG will provide final input and participate in evaluation activities.

Iterative Development and Open Dissemination

All training materials will be developed iteratively with feedback from multiple stakeholders, reflecting IMLS's commitment to continuous improvement and practitioner-focused resources. Draft curricula will be reviewed by the SAG and advisory board before each initial training, refined based on participant feedback, and revised again after participants implement the materials at their institutions. The dual-cohort model is designed to support this process; lessons from Cohort 1 will directly strengthen Cohort 2, producing increasingly effective resources over the project period.

Materials will be uploaded to the project website as they are finalized, allowing other institutions to begin using them immediately. Each upload will include implementation guidance, notes on institutional context, and examples from varied settings. All resources will be licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 to maximize adaptability and reuse. Website analytics will track usage patterns, and the site will include options for users to share adaptations and experiences, creating a growing repository of implementation strategies.

EVALUATION AND DEMONSTRATING IMPACT

SSAAILL will employ a multi-method evaluation approach aligned with IMLS performance measures (Effectiveness, Efficiency, Quality, Timeliness) and focused on documenting impact on student learning and library contributions to institutional student success.

Effectiveness will be assessed through participant outcomes at three levels:

- **Level 1: Immediate learning & confidence.** Retrospective pre/post surveys will measure (a) knowledge gains in AI literacy pedagogy (Track 1), assessment with AI tools (Track 2), and value communication (Track 3), and (b) participants' self-efficacy in applying new skills. The dual-cohort model enables comparison of outcomes to document improvements in training effectiveness.
- **Level 2: Implementation.** Participant reports will document the cascade effect, i.e., how many colleagues were trained, which programs/projects were implemented, and challenges/solutions identified. Comparative analysis across cohorts will identify factors supporting successful implementation.
- **Level 3: Student impact.** Track 1 participants will collect pre/post evidence of students' AI literacy using rubrics. Track 2 participants will document how integrating library data into institutional analyses generated new collaborations, insights, and interventions. Track 3 participants will document how their advocacy work contributed to institutional understanding of and support for student learning.

Efficiency will be evaluated through multiple measures examining resource optimization. Annual analysis of budget records and participant reports will calculate how many librarians benefited from each dollar of partner stipend investment and each hour of expert facilitation time. Project documentation will track how SSAAILL leveraged existing infrastructure (university technology, conference venues, established frameworks) rather than creating new resources, minimizing costs while maintaining quality. Annual participant surveys will measure the extent to which expected learning outcomes were achieved relative to time invested, including hours spent, perceived efficiency of conference-based delivery, and institutional time saved by embedding training within existing conference attendance. Website analytics will calculate the number of institutions accessing SSAAILL materials relative to development and hosting costs, providing a metric of dissemination efficiency over time.

Quality will be assessed through stakeholder feedback: (a) participant evaluations immediately after training (content relevance, facilitation effectiveness), (b) partner quarterly feedback on curriculum effectiveness and iterative improvements, (c) SAG feedback on relevance and incorporation of student perspectives (collected each semester), (d) Advisory Board biannual reviews of project trajectory and materials, and (e) community feedback via webinar surveys

and website analytics. The dual-cohort model will enable assessment of quality improvement from Cohort 1 to Cohort 2 in each track.

Timeliness will be monitored through monthly PI check-ins, comparing actual progress to the Schedule of Completion. The dual-cohort model creates natural checkpoints for assessing progress, and any delays will be documented with mitigation strategies to support timely completion.

Data collection will draw on Qualtrics surveys, participant reports, case studies, webinar analytics, SAG notes, and website usage data. The PI will prepare annual progress reports and a final comprehensive evaluation that synthesizes outcomes across all six cohorts, identifies success factors, documents iterative improvement, and presents evidence of student learning impact.

PROJECT RESULTS

Intended Results and How They Address the Need

SSAAILL will produce three interconnected results that directly address the urgent need for academic librarians to support student learning in the age of AI:

- **Result 1: A prepared workforce of instruction librarians equipped to teach student AI literacy.** The 50 Track 1 participants, training an estimated 250+ colleagues, will implement student-facing programming that builds critical thinking skills for evaluating and improving AI-generated answers. This addresses students' shift toward "answer first" inquiry by positioning librarians as guides at the first interpretive step of research. The CARE framework offers students a transferable method usable across disciplines and AI tools. Evidence of impact will include documented improvements in students' ability to classify, assess, review, and enhance AI outputs, supporting academic success and workforce readiness in an AI-augmented environment.
- **Result 2: Academic libraries contributing meaningful data to institutional student success initiatives.** The 30 Track 2 participants, engaging 150+ assessment and systems colleagues, will establish library data integration within institutional learning analyses of student learning and success. This addresses the persistent issue of library invisibility in data-informed decision-making. Evidence of impact will include cases in which library data reveals previously hidden learning patterns, informs institutional interventions, and demonstrates library contributions to retention, persistence, and achievement, particularly for students from underserved populations whose engagement patterns may differ from peers.
- **Result 3: Library leaders who can advocate effectively for library value in the AI era.** The 30 Track 3 participants, preparing 150+ associate leaders, will communicate library contributions in ways that align with institutional priorities and AI-enhanced analytics. This counters ongoing marginalization of libraries in strategic planning by equipping leaders with evidence-based narratives about libraries' dual role in developing student AI literacy and contributing to institutional understanding of student success. Building on and adapting ACRL advocacy frameworks for AI-augmented decision environments, Track 3 participants will secure resources and partnerships that sustain library support for learning.

Collectively, these results position academic libraries as essential partners in higher education's response to AI, moving libraries from peripheral service providers to central contributors to student learning and institutional analytics, and advancing LB21's goal of preparing library professionals to meet evolving community needs.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

SSAAILL will produce the following deliverables, made available through an open-access project website:

- **Track 1 deliverables** include the training curriculum (presentation modules, facilitation activities, and assessment instruments) refined across two cohorts; student-facing instructional materials (lesson plans, assignment templates, evaluation rubrics) tested across diverse institutional contexts; a train-the-trainer toolkit with facilitation guides and strategies for colleague training; and case studies from 50 institutions documenting implementation and comparative approaches across institution types and student populations.

- **Track 2 deliverables** include an annotated toolkit of AI assessment tools with guidance on use cases and limitations; a data-integration guide on contributing meaningful library data to learning analytics systems while maintaining ethical practices; a privacy and ethics framework with decision tree for sensitive data; adaptable assessment project templates for varied institutional contexts and maturity levels; and case studies from 30 institutions demonstrating successful partnerships with institutional research and student success units.
- **Track 3 deliverables** include a value-communication toolkit (talking points, data-visualization templates, presentation decks) refined across two cohorts; a positioning guide to help leaders align library contributions with institutional priorities; advocacy resources for engaging senior administrators and funders; a leadership cascade model enabling administrators to train their teams; and case studies from 30 institutions illustrating effective advocacy strategies across diverse campus cultures.
- **Shared deliverables** include the project website housing all materials with open licensing and accessibility compliance; a curated resource collection linking to complementary frameworks, tools, and research; annual progress reports documenting implementation and impact across cohorts; a final evaluation report synthesizing outcomes across all six cohorts and identifying factors contributing to successful implementation; and conference presentations disseminating findings to practitioner audiences (ACRL 2027 and 2029, CNI December 2027, ARL IMPACT 2028).

ENSURING ADAPTABILITY, GENERALIZABILITY, AND USABILITY

All SSAAILL materials will be designed for broad applicability across diverse institutional contexts. Several design features ensure adaptability:

- **Modular curriculum design** allows institutions to select components aligned with their priorities and capacity. Track 1 materials can be used in single-session workshops, semester-long courses, or first-year experience programs. Track 2 templates accommodate institutions at varying levels of assessment maturity, from those beginning to explore data integration to those with established infrastructures. Track 3 resources include versions tailored to different institutional types and stakeholder groups (e.g., trustees, provosts, deans, funders).
- Materials will be **tested across diverse contexts** through the 110 participating institutions. Participant selection will prioritize diversity in Carnegie classification, size, resources, student demographics, and geography. The dual-cohort model provides additional validation; materials refined after Cohort 1 will be tested again in Cohort 2, strengthening generalizability. Implementation case studies will document successes and challenges, offering realistic guidance on when local adaptation is necessary versus when materials can be used as-is.
- **Open licensing and accessibility** under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 will allow institutions to adapt materials while ensuring attribution. All materials will meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards and include multiple formats (slides, facilitation scripts, handouts, assessment tools) to accommodate varied learning and implementation needs. Materials will be tested for accessibility and usability with diverse learner populations.
- **Feedback loops** built into the development process ensure continuous improvement. Materials will be refined based on SAG input (representing student perspectives), participant feedback during training (representing practitioner needs), implementation reports from institutional cascade (representing real-world application challenges), advisory board review (representing field expertise), and input from the broader community accessing materials on the project website (representing varied adoption contexts). The dual-cohort structure creates explicit improvement cycles, i.e., Cohort 1 experiences directly inform Cohort 2 materials.

DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

SSAAILL uses a multi-channel dissemination approach designed to reach both academic librarians and adjacent stakeholders (e.g., institutional research, teaching and learning centers, student success initiatives).

- **Immediate dissemination** will occur as materials are finalized. The project website will serve as the central hub, with curricula, toolkits, templates, and case studies posted on a rolling basis, enabling immediate adoption by institutions outside the training cohorts. Website analytics will track usage, reach, and resource demand to inform dissemination.

- **Practitioner-focused presentations** at ACRL 2027, CNI (December 2027), ARL IMPACT 2028, and ACRL 2029 will be proposed to share project progress, preliminary findings, and emerging resources with the audiences most likely to implement SSAAILL approaches. Presenting at the same conferences that host trainings maximizes visibility, ensuring attendees can engage with the project even if they are not cohort participants.
- **Professional-network dissemination** through ACRL sections, ARL committees, CNI communications, and state/regional associations will broaden reach beyond conference attendees. The PI and partners will leverage their leadership roles to distribute materials through listservs, newsletters, and organizational websites. Given Lo's ACRL leadership, Croxton's assessment community roles, and Levine-Clark's involvement in OCLC and regional consortia, the project has strong access to national dissemination channels.
- **Academic dissemination**, if project findings warrant, will occur through journal articles in *College & Research Libraries*, *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, or similar peer-reviewed venues. However, following IMLS priorities for practitioner accessibility, the primary focus remains on open-access web materials and conference presentations rather than paywalled publications. Any scholarly publications will be deposited in open-access repositories to ensure broad availability.
- **Cross-sector communication** to institutional research, teaching and learning centers, and student success teams will occur through presentations proposed at venues such as AIR, POD Network, and EDUCAUSE, positioning libraries as essential partners in AI literacy and learning analytics efforts. These adjacent communities must understand library contributions to student learning to support effective collaboration.

SUSTAINABILITY BEYOND THE GRANT PERIOD

SSAAILL is designed for sustainability through mechanisms ensuring benefits extend well beyond August 2029:

- **Community of practice infrastructure** established during the grant will continue afterward. The 110 trained librarians, connected through biannual webinars and shared implementation across six cohorts, form a robust network for ongoing peer learning and support. This community can be sustained through lightweight infrastructure (email lists, Zoom calls) requiring minimal resources. Cross-cohort connections, especially Cohort 1 mentoring Cohort 2, create relationships that naturally extend into ongoing support.
- **Freely available materials** ensure continued adoption without additional funding. Any academic library can access, adapt, and implement SSAAILL resources at any time. The project website will be maintained by Syracuse University's iSchool as part of its commitment to open scholarship and professional development.
- **Integration with existing professional development structures** further supports long-term use. ACRL may incorporate SSAAILL materials into programs such as Immersion. The University of Virginia Library's AI Literacy and Action Lab will incorporate Track 1 materials into its ongoing professional development programming, providing a venue for continued use and refinement beyond the grant period. Conference-based partnerships position SSAAILL for ongoing inclusion in ACRL, ARL, and CNI programming. State and regional associations may use materials for local workshops, and LIS programs may embed components into courses on instruction, assessment, or leadership.
- **Cascading expertise** creates ongoing capacity building. Each trained participant becomes a local trainer, able to teach colleagues indefinitely. With 110 participants training at least five colleagues each, the project generates 660+ distributed points of expertise, reducing reliance on external trainers and sustaining knowledge across institutions.
- **Partner institution commitment** reinforces long-term sustainability. Lo's ongoing work as Advisor to the Provost for AI Literacy at UVA and his leadership in ACRL's AI initiatives, Croxton's continued development of assessment and advocacy resources, and Levine-Clark's strategic roles in national organizations ensure continued advancement and refinement of SSAAILL approaches. Sustained leadership guarantees that project frameworks evolve with the field.
- **Alignment with institutional priorities** makes SSAAILL approaches inherently sustainable. As institutions continue investing in AI literacy education and learning analytics to meet evolving student and workforce needs, libraries using SSAAILL frameworks are positioned as essential partners in these strategic initiatives. This alignment makes library engagement self-sustaining through institutional need rather than external funding; libraries become indispensable to institutional success in the AI era rather than supplemental services competing for limited resources.

SCHEDULE OF COMPLETION

Applicant Name: Syracuse University

Project Title: SSAAILL: Student Success through Assessment and AI Literacy in Libraries

Schedule of Completion - Year 1 (September 2026 - August 2027)

[illegible]

Schedule of Completion - Year 2 (September 2027 - August 2028)

[illegible]

Schedule of Completion - Year 3 (September 2028 - August 2029)

[illegible]