

Best Practice Guidelines for Theological Libraries Serving Doctoral Programs

Katharina Penner, Editor. *Best Practice Guidelines for Theological Libraries Serving Doctoral Programs*. Cumbria, United Kingdom: Langham Global Library, 2021. 80pp. \$16.99. Paperback. 9781839736025.

Best Practice Guidelines for Theological Libraries Serving Doctoral Programs is a concise, but thorough guide concerning the library's role in building and supporting a doctoral program in Majority World theological schools. The book is well organized, covering the subject broadly and with specific examples. While it is written primarily for librarians, the book is also a useful tool for school administrators and accreditation officers.

The purpose of this book is clearly stated in the work's introduction: "To raise awareness and stimulate discussion on the value and contribution of libraries to the success of doctoral programs in theological schools related to ICETE" (1). The book's relation to the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) explains the work's focus on the Majority World. The organization is sponsored by seven regional associations of theological schools; the association for North American libraries is only one of these. The organization is evangelical in perspective. Of interest to Atla members, the sponsoring Association for Biblical Higher Education comprises 160 schools in North America.

The book is well organized and detailed. It is divided into two parts. In the first part, the editor, Katharina Penner, presents sixteen sequentially numbered best practice principles arranged into five areas: 1. Integration of library in planning a doctoral program; 2. Partnerships and collaboration; 3. Collection development and management; 4. The role(s) of library personnel; and 5. Information literacy in doctoral program(s) (12-17). As an example of this format, under area 1, Penner writes about the first two principles, those related to planning. Underpinning the first principle is her conviction that "the limited role of caretaker of a collection is insufficient if an academic library is to service a doctoral program" (5). Librarians need to be an integral part of the doctoral degree planning process in conjunction with school faculty and administration. The library needs to plan for the changes it must undergo in resources, facilities, and services well before the program begins. The second principle addresses doctoral students' particular needs. Penner writes, "The library prioritizes the unique needs of doctoral students and assigns personnel for the doctoral programs" (7). Penner describes this "doctoral librarian" as one who does more than collection development for the program. Instead, this librarian is assigned to the doctoral program as a "companion" in scholarly conversation and a "guide" to new research and changing technology. Penner then turns to a discussion of partnerships and collaboration, identifying principles 3 and 4, and so forth for the remainder of the chapter.

The second part of the book highlights four examples of these principles in action, focusing on libraries in Nairobi, Hong Kong, Bangalore, and Amsterdam. The first example, titled "A Joint Collaborative Task: The Africa International University Library (Nairobi)," highlights the opportunities and importance of partnerships and collaboration. Three years before the doctoral program began, the librarian became involved with faculty and administration in planning and fundraising. Further, out of a library committee composed of faculty, students, IT, and a librarian grew the Library Development Project, which guided the restructuring of the library. The library space was redesigned to allow for more books, more study space, and upgraded technology. Additionally, the

library gained input from two visiting librarians. Numerous other partnerships inside and outside of the institution contributed to a successful start to the doctoral program.

This librarians' guide is written to instruct those with a vested interest in theological library support for doctoral programs. While aimed at Majority World libraries and their institutions, it serves as a reliable guide for any theological school. Although the editor does not set out to describe the experience of librarians in developed nations, there is certainly value in any library serving doctoral programs turning to this book for a checkup.

This work is a brief 78 pages but thorough, and its streamlined approach lays down a well thought out framework for guiding the conversation about the library's role in a new doctoral program initiative. The book strives to highlight the role of theological librarians and libraries in the ground-up development and continued success of Majority World doctoral programs, and it encourages the discussion of these topics.

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