
INTEREST GROUP REPORTS

Public Services

David E. Schmursal, Stitt Library, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT

- Daniel Baek, Vancouver School of Theology
- Charles Bellinger, Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University
- Jane Elder, Bridwell Library, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University
- Daniel Flores, Texas Lutheran University
- Laura Giacobbe, Gardner A. Sage Library
- Steve Jamieson, Covenant Theological Seminary
- Elizabeth Young Miller, Reeves Library, Moravian College & Moravian Theological Seminary
- Beth Perry, McAfee School of Theology
- David E. Schmursal, Stitt Library, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
- John Shaffett, Shorter University
- Daniel Smith, The Styberg Library, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
- Kate Wimer, George Fox University

ABSENT MEMBERS

- Suzanne Estelle-Holmer, Yale Divinity School Library
- Leslie Fuller, Bridwell Library, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University
- Kaeley McMahan, Wake Forest University
- Mary-Carol Riehs, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
- Jennifer Ulrich, Eastern Mennonite University
- Garrit van Dyk, Brigham Young University

AGENDA

1) Welcome (and thank you) to Elizabeth Young Miller who is assuming a leadership role in the group.

2) Atla LibGuide: Websites on Religion:

<https://atla.libguides.com/WOR>

After Atla assumed ownership of the Websites on Religion list created by Charles Bellinger and formerly maintained by the Wabash Center, Atla hired Jim Darlack to convert this content into a LibGuide, available on Atla's website: <https://atla.libguides.com/WOR>. Christine Fruin of Atla has asked members of the Public Services Interest Group and the World Religions Interest Group to collaborate with other members of Atla, and of the wider realm of religious and theological studies, to develop and maintain this LibGuide going forward.

Developing this guide to curated, free, open-access online resources in religion and theology will be useful not only for librarians but also for alumni and others who do not have access to subscription databases. It is our hope that the development of this guide will serve as a catalyst for the creation of additional stand-alone guides that will facilitate exploring individual faith traditions, their history, and their sacred texts in greater depth.

The group discussed the desirability of adding a section featuring denominational resources and websites.

3) Discussion

- a. What accommodations/adaptations made during the pandemic do you anticipate carrying on as we (hopefully) get back to something more akin to “normal”?

Members of the group discussed various changes made to public services during the pandemic, for example purchasing a book drop or delivering books directly to faculty offices, and the likelihood that such changes will be continued in the future. Many also noted the change to purchasing e-books primarily or exclusively. Several group members shared considerable increases in the use of chat and video options for reference and some group members noted the benefits of using the share screen functions of video conferencing software (such as Zoom) even in in-person reference and research consultations.

- b. If you could go back in time (to February 2020) and tell yourself to make one change to your public services, what would it be?

The consensus among members of the group was that if we could go back in time and change one aspect of public services, it would be placing greater emphasis on purchasing and offering instruction featuring electronic resources, particularly e-books. In addition, some noted a desire to enhance training for student staff.

- c. Additional topics

A few members of the group shared experiences (good and bad) of working in libraries undergoing a renovation during the pandemic.

OTHER

The PSIG sponsored a session at the 2021 Atla conference: P and/or E: That Is (Still) the Question (Or Is It?): Collection Development in a Post-pandemic World, featuring three panelists: Steve Perisho of Seattle Pacific University, Juliana Morley of Talbot School of Theology, and David Schmearsal of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary.