

EXPERT INSIGHTS: BUILDING STRATEGIC LIBRARY PARTNERSHIPS

5 TAKEAWAYS from the “Institutional Goals, Library Solutions” Webinar

WEBINAR PANELISTS:

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As priorities in higher education evolve and digital needs continue to increase, academic librarians must think beyond acquiring content to keep up with changing student demographics, equip students for an evolving workforce, manage shifting research priorities, and navigate budget constraints. Aligning your library’s strategic missions with your institution’s goals is essential for academic success.

In our recent webinar “Institutional Goals, Library Solutions,” experts from East Carolina University and the University of Maryland shared their experiences on how libraries can keep up with shifting institutional priorities. Compiled here are the top takeaways from the panelists, including strategies on how to partner with vendors to maximize resources and better align with campus-wide goals. Get actionable advice to enhance research and instruction with resources like *Gale Accelerate* and *Gale Digital Scholar Lab* while supporting institutional growth.

1 UNDERSTAND BROAD INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

Institutions are increasingly focused on areas like student success, workforce development, and research innovation. By aligning library initiatives with these broader institutional goals, librarians can provide access to relevant resources and create environments where students and faculty thrive.

During the webinar, Lisa Barricella emphasized the need for libraries to be actively involved in the institution's strategic planning processes. By participating in cross-departmental committees and regularly communicating with university leadership, libraries can better align their acquisitions and services with the institution's overarching objectives.



Actionable Tip:

Work closely with university leadership and participate in campus committees, such as curriculum development or research planning, to stay informed of institutional priorities. This will give you better insights to ensure your library's resources directly support institutional goals.

2 LEVERAGE VENDOR EXPERTISE

Forming the right partnerships can make all the difference in your library's success. Panelists shared how partnering with vendors like Gale is crucial in maximizing their libraries' value. Vendor programs like Gale Accelerate provide libraries with the flexibility to acquire large collections at a discount while maintaining the freedom to adjust collections as institutional needs change.

Kapil Vasudev noted how valuable vendor-led audits of their library's database lists were in identifying underutilized resources and ensuring that faculty and students had access to all available materials. This proactive approach helped maximize their library's offerings without stretching their budget.



Actionable Tip:

Leverage vendor expertise to identify and fill gaps in your resource offerings. Programs like Gale's A-to-Z database audit can reveal resources you already have but might not be fully utilizing. Additionally, vendors can offer tailored training to help increase usage of resources across campus.

3 ALIGN RESOURCES WITH RESEARCH AND INSTRUCTIONAL NEEDS

Supporting both research and instructional needs presents a dual challenge to academic librarians. Libraries must provide tools that enable advanced research while also meeting the teaching and learning requirements of students and faculty.

Jeanne Hoover shared how their library invests in tools that empower students to engage in digital humanities research, such as text and data mining. These tools not only support faculty research but also equip students with critical skills for the workforce. Panelists cited *Gale Digital Scholar Lab* as an essential resource for digital humanities projects, helping both students and faculty work with data in innovative ways.



Actionable Tip:

Ensure that your library offers a balance of resources to meet both the instructional and the research needs of your institution. This can include primary sources for research as well as teaching tools that faculty can use to enrich their courses.

4 CHOOSE FLEXIBLE ACQUISITION MODELS

One of the key points raised by panelists is the need for flexibility when acquiring resources. Budget constraints are a common challenge in academic libraries, so librarians must carefully manage acquisitions while ensuring they have the tools needed to support institutional goals.

Lisa Barricella shared how East Carolina University benefits from Gale Accelerate, a program which allows them to acquire more content without long-term commitments and adapt to evolving priorities. With the ability to add, swap, or cancel archives, they've been able to expand their collections while avoiding long-term financial strain. The program's cost-effective model, combined with the ability to modify collections yearly, provides vital flexibility.



Actionable Tip:

Look for acquisition models that allow you to adjust your collections year by year. This flexibility ensures you can continuously adapt to changing institutional priorities while maintaining budget control.

5 FORM COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS CAMPUS

Cross-departmental collaboration ensures that library resources meet the needs of all students, faculty, and researchers. Panelists discussed how building relationships across the institution allows libraries to anticipate needs and acquire resources that directly support both academic and administrative priorities.

Maggie Saponaro explained how working closely with subject specialists and academic departments helps her library identify critical gaps in their collections. Regular feedback from faculty and students informs acquisition decisions, ensuring that the library's resources are always aligned with the institution's evolving goals.



Actionable Tip:

Establish regular communication channels with faculty, students, and academic departments to ensure that your library's acquisitions and services remain relevant and aligned with institutional priorities. This can involve creating a feedback loop through surveys, focus groups, or formal committees.

Strategic library partnerships are essential for libraries looking to meet evolving institutional goals. By partnering with experienced vendors, leveraging flexible acquisition models, and collaborating across campus, you can successfully align resources with both research and instructional needs to accomplish campus-wide objectives.

Want to learn more about how you can access cost-effective solutions to stay ahead of institutional demands? See how Gale Accelerate helps libraries maximize their budgets while adapting to future needs without long-term financial commitments.



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