

Courtney, Nancy, ed. *Academic Library Outreach: Beyond the Campus Walls*. Westport, CN: ABC-CLIO-Libraries Unlimited, 2009. 270 pp. ISBN 9781591587255. \$45.00.

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Although it is widely accepted that libraries are important pillars of the communities they serve, this is more often the case in public libraries than it is in academic libraries; unfortunately, this statement is especially true in 2010. In the face of budget cuts and staff shortages, it is often hard for academic librarians to even think about reaching out beyond the campus walls—let alone trying to justify spending the time to actually do outreach. That truth is, however, is what makes Nancy Courtney’s *Academic Library Outreach: Beyond the Campus Walls* so refreshing and useful.

Academic Library Outreach is a compilation written by various librarians, with chapters divided by sections: K-12 and Information Literacy; Public Libraries; Special Collections and Digital Projects; Events and Exhibits; and Discipline-Specific Outreach. These sections cover almost every conceivable method academic librarians can utilize to reach out to the larger university community, to get beyond their campus walls, using everything from working with school librarians to collaborating with the local public library system. Each author walks the reader through various types of outreach programs. Each chapter shares which programs and initiatives worked, which ones failed or did not produce the kind of results desired, and authors follow up with what else could have been done.

One message that is highlighted throughout the book by the diverse group of authors is the importance of outreach, or more specifically, why it should never be ignored. Some chapters

also point out that lack of finances should not be an excuse, as academic libraries can use existing collections, and resources that are already at hand, to engage the larger public. A couple of the chapters cited digital archives and digitization projects as examples of ways to increase public awareness of resources. Other chapters noted ways of using events, exhibits, and government information to reach out to the broader community; these were particularly well-written, and very useful.

While the ideas in Courtney's collection are effective, efficient, and easy—in other words, wonderful—the most impressive part of *Academic Library Outreach* is how it addresses almost every type of library associated with academic institutions or their subsidiary colleges. Chapters on outreach programs for law and medical school libraries were particularly impressive, and even more vital, as those libraries seem even further removed from the public. These chapters show that *any* academic library can use outreach techniques to its benefit.

Obviously, this collection will be a wonderful addition to any academic library's collection, but it will be found essential for those with librarians already interested in outreach. Fascinating to read, cover-to-cover, Courtney's text can also serve as a quick reference guide for the would-be outreach librarian who has time to read only the chapters that relate to his/her library. While some academic library directors may find it hard to justify the staffing time spent to engage the community, *Academic Library Outreach* serves to remind us all that in the long run, outreach is vital. After all, in these times of austerity, it may have to be the larger university community that just may have to save our academic libraries.