EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT IN RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP

In the five years that I have been on tenure track at SLIS, I have published two books, fifteen peer-reviewed journal articles, four book chapters, and six articles in peer-reviewed conference proceedings, with a seventh accepted for the European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL) conference in October 2016. Not only do I have a solid number of peer-reviewed articles published, but the majority of them have been published in high-impact journals. *College & Research Libraries*, *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *Reference Services Review*, *Library Quarterly*, *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, *The Journal of Library Administration*, *portal: Libraries and the Academy* and *The Reference Librarian* are all ranked as Q1 by Scopus' *SCImago*, a freely accessible journal ranking services (http://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php). *Public Services Quarterly* and *Libri* are ranked as Q2.

My research focuses on reference and information literacy/instruction, but within that broad area I have pursued several different lines of inquiry, involving a variety of different research methodologies. One major area of interest is investigating how colleges and universities are addressing accreditation standards for information literacy. In support of this research, I engaged in content analysis of the standards and supporting documentation of the six regional accreditation organizations, and of the self-studies of colleges and universities nationwide, as well as case studies of institutions identified as having robust information literacy programs. I followed those studies up with surveys and interviews of discipline faculty regarding their understanding of information literacy within their disciplines. These topics have proven to be very fruitful areas of research. Publications resulting from these studies are among my most highly cited, and *Regional Accreditation Organizations' Treatment of Information Literacy: Outcomes, Definitions, and Assessment* was chosen as one of the Twenty Best Articles of the Year by the Library Instruction Round Table in 2007. Further, my knowledge in the area of accreditation and information literacy has led to invitations and other opportunities. For example, I was invited to participate as one of the experts on a Delphi study that helped to develop the new ACRL *Framework* for information literacy. I have also been invited to speak on the topic at a number of events, including the 2015 NEASC Annual Conference.

I have conducted a number of studies related to reference services and competencies. One publication resulting from these studies, *Significantly Different?,* won the Reference Services Press Award in 2013. The reference studies also led to an opportunity to participate in an international research project, which eventually resulted in further international collaborations. I led the first project, which took place from 2011-2012, and involved a replication of the original survey on reference competencies in thirteen different countries and 10 different languages. The article resulting from that study, *Culture and Competencies: A Multi-Country Examination of Reference Service Competencies*, was winner of the ACRL New England Best Paper Award for 2013. Since then, I have been involved in two additional studies with the same group of international colleagues: an examination of the information-seeking behaviors of LIS students, and a study of the copyright literacy of professional librarians. At the ECIL conference in 2016, I will be meeting with the group to propose a new collaboration based on a current study I am conducting with SLIS student Jes Caron examining the information literacy gap in the high school to college transition. Being part of an international team has been exciting, and has led to several opportunities, including presentations at international conferences, and meeting scholars from around the world. These opportunities not only help to expand my own impact as a scholar, but also bring the Simmons College and SLIS brands to new audiences.

Another area of inquiry which I have been pursuing centers on social justice aspects of librarianship, especially in the areas of reference and information literacy. This strand of

scholarship began with a paper entitled *Information as Weapon* presented at the 2013 ACRL conference. I coordinated two symposiums, entitled *The Right to Know*, on the topic at SLIS in spring 2014 and 2015. In addition to coordinating the symposiums, I moderated panel presentations, and presented a section on information access and information literacy from the perspective of library science. Since then, I've been involved in a campaign to adopt a frame on information social justice into the new ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy*. I've presented at a few conferences on the topic, and in July 2016 I'll be co-presenting a full-day workshop on Information Social Justice as a Library Service Strategy with Lisa Hinchliffe. Lisa and I were invited to present this workshop by the CCIL, a consortium of Catholic colleges in California, after a librarian from one of the colleges saw our presentation on the topic at the 2015 LOEX Fall Focus. This area of inquiry is especially important to me as it brings together my interest in information literacy with my interest in critical pedagogy and social justice. Going forward, I plan to pursue this area of research, beginning with a content analysis of library instruction materials to see the extent to which social justice topics are currently integrated into library instruction sessions.

I have received several small grants for research. These include the OCLC/ALISE research grant for $14,797, awarded in 2012 to support the international study of reference competencies. I also received a $2,000 Hollowell grant from Simmons SLIS to conduct focus groups of employers over the summer of 2013. The purpose of these focus groups was to gather feedback from internship supervisors and potential employers of SLIS graduates on the curriculum and overall readiness of SLIS students for professional practice. Finally, I received $1,000 from the President's Diversity and Inclusion Action Council of Simmons College to support the *Right to Know* Symposium. I also applied twice for the IMLS Laura Bush Early Career Research Grant and while I was not funded for either proposal, I learned a lot from the experience of developing a detailed proposal and budget for a grant of that size. I am now discussing with our Dean the possibility of applying for another IMLS grant.

In addition to the grant funding and awards noted above, there is additional evidence of the impact of my research on the field. Accompanying the list of publications in my dossier, is a list of citations to each of my publications. To compile this list, I cross-referenced several sources including *Web of Knowledge*, *Ebsco*, *ResearchGate* and *Google Scholar*, and eliminated duplications, self-citations, and citations from non-scholarly sources such as PowerPoint presentations and Master's theses. Thus, the resultant list includes what can be considered substantive references to my work. As the list illustrates, I have eight publications with ten or more citations, and four with over thirty citations. Currently, "Faculty Perspectives on Information Literacy" and "Regional Accreditation Organizations' Treatment of Information Literacy" are my most highly-cited singly-authored articles. "Faculty Perspectives on Information Literacy" is also listed as one of the most cited articles on the *Journal of Academic Librarianship's* web page. Similarly, "Academic Libraries' Strategic Plans," is listed as one of the *Journal of Academic Librarianship's* most downloaded articles. "Learning from our Mistakes," is one of the most read articles in *College and Undergraduate Libraries*, and "The Reality of Reference," is one of the most read articles in *Public Services Quarterly*.

In addition to the overall number of citations, the source of citation can give an indication of the impact of my work. Citations to my articles come from a variety of high impact publications, including such titles as *Library and Information Science Research*, the *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, and *The Reference Librarian*, as well as from highly respected scholars, including Megan Oakleaf, Christine Bruce, Lynn Silipigni Connaway, and Sharon Weiner. It is also interesting to note that there are several international citations to my work, including some in languages other than English, which speaks to the reach of my work.

Reviews of some of my publications also speak to the quality and impact of my work. These reviews are all linked to the [Supplemental Evidence](#) page of my dossier. *Repositioning Reference*, co-authored with Lily Rozaklis and Eileen Abels, received three highly positive reviews from *Library Journal*, *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, and *Public Services Quarterly*. Steve Brantley, reviewing for *Public Services Quarterly*, says that amidst the literature on the topic, *Repositioning Reference* "stands out from the bulk of these offerings due to its straightforward and concise writing while remaining nearly comprehensive in scope," and recommends the book for "for any reference service librarian or manager interested in bringing themselves or their colleagues into the contemporary information service milieu." He also adds "I have had the pleasure of reading Laura Saunders work in the past and I am repeatedly impressed with her ability to present sophisticated and historically complex bodies of work in well organized, easily understood language. Saunders is masterful in her ability to synthesize and document the literature of her subject, even for the high standards of information professionals. The chapter end notes and bibliography could serve as the reading list for a post Master of Library Science specialist certificate in Reference Services at any Library and Information Science (LIS) graduate school." In her *Library Journal* review, Donna Marie Smith writes "this well-researched and wise book is essential reading for library and information studies faculty and students, current reference librarians, and administrators of academic, public, and special libraries," while Laura Graveline of *Reference & User Services Quarterly* comments that the book "delivers" on its "grand title."

The scholarship outlined above provides a strong foundation for an ambitious research agenda going forward. Currently, I am finishing data collection on a nationwide study of the K-16 information literacy gap undertaken in conjunction with SLIS student Jes Caron. Specifically, through parallel surveys to college and high school librarians, we are examining which information literacy skills each type of librarian believes to be important to college success, how proficient they perceive students to be, and where they believe those skills should be addressed. This study builds on and expands my previous research into information literacy and assessment, and explores an under-studied area, namely the high school to college transition. Response to the survey has been positive, with a number of participants emailing me to assert the importance of the topic and to ask to see the results. We have already had a proposal based on the study accepted for the ECIL 2016 conference, and another under review for ACRL 2017. I am also in the midst of data collection for a content analysis of library instruction materials to identify patterns and themes in the content and focus of information literacy instruction. Ideally, I would like to parlay that study into a larger examination of the new ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy*, specifically testing the extent to which the six frames adhere to the definition of threshold concepts.

Looking further ahead, as noted above I am exploring the possibility of submitting a grant proposal to IMLS. This would be a project grant, loosely based on the SNAAP program for arts administration that tracks alumni careers and uses the information to inform curricular and programmatic decisions. I think this project would be extremely timely and relevant. The LIS field is in flux, and we know that our graduates work in a wide variety of settings and positions, and that the skills, qualities, and knowledge necessary for success varies by setting and position. It is very challenging to gather clear data about employment, including expectation of competencies and perceived career readiness. However, such data could be invaluable in informing curricular decisions, as well as accreditation and assessment standards. The SNAAP program provides a blueprint for gathering alumni data, which could be adapted to the LIS field and expanded to incorporate feedback from employers and internship supervisors. I am interested in such a project because it brings together my interests in assessment and accreditation with earlier studies I have done on LIS competencies and LIS education. It also would begin address some big questions about how best to prepare students in a professional program to transition into practice.

Overall, I find research and scholarship to be one of the most exciting areas of my practice. I enjoy the opportunities it affords to delve into important questions and to use the results to inform and

improve teaching, education, and professional practice. As I gain confidence and experience in developing research projects, I am beginning to find more ways to involve students in these projects. For instance, this past year I had my Graduate Student Assistant involved in data collection and analysis for two studies I was conducting. She also helped to draft part of the manuscript based on the results, and her name is on the paper currently under review. As noted above, I am currently involved in another project with SLIS Dean's Fellow Jes Caron, and as I develop my proposal for an IMLS grant, I expect to integrate a PhD student research assistant into the budget. In this way, I can share opportunities with my students, helping them to learn about the research process and to build their resumes as they prepare to enter professional practice. I am looking forward to continuing my work in this area.