



University of Kentucky
UKnowledge

Library Faculty and Staff Publications

University of Kentucky Libraries

Fall 2017

Book Review: *Students Lead the Library: The Importance of Student Contributions to the Academic Library*

Jennifer A. Bartlett

University of Kentucky, jen.bartlett@uky.edu

[Click here to let us know how access to this document benefits you.](#)

Follow this and additional works at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/libraries_facpub

 Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Bartlett, Jennifer A., "Book Review: *Students Lead the Library: The Importance of Student Contributions to the Academic Library*" (2017). *Library Faculty and Staff Publications*. 287.

https://uknowledge.uky.edu/libraries_facpub/287

This Review is brought to you for free and open access by the University of Kentucky Libraries at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in Library Faculty and Staff Publications by an authorized administrator of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.

Book Review: *Students Lead the Library: The Importance of Student Contributions to the Academic Library*

Notes/Citation Information

Published in *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, v. 57, no. 1, p. 66.

© 2017 RUSA

The copyright holder has granted the permission for posting the article here.

Digital Object Identifier (DOI)

<https://doi.org/10.5860/rusq.57.1.6454>

Students Lead the Library: The Importance of Student Contributions to the Academic Library. Edited by Sara Arnold-Garza and Carissa Tomlinson. Chicago: ALA, 2017. 302 pages. Paper \$62 (978-0-8389-8867-1).

Academic libraries, often said to be the “heart of the university,” owe their existence and importance to the students they serve. Students are at the core of the library mission, driving decisions in collections, services, innovation, outreach, and research support. However, their direct role in institutional planning is minimal, and their primary role is most often that of library user. Given their importance to libraries, how can students actively participate in library success? *Students Lead the Library* offers several examples of student involvement in action, or, as editors Sara Arnold-Garza and Carissa Tomlinson state, “this book seeks to elevate the act of asking students what they need and want by not simply involving students, but instead putting them into a leadership role, where they will determine what gets improved and how” (vii).

This collection of sixteen case studies demonstrate that student leadership may be developed in many ways that benefit both students and their libraries. Arnold-Garza and Tomlinson establish a theoretical framework for student

involvement programs by emphasizing that these initiatives can enhance the student educational experience through leadership development, engagement, experiential learning, and peer learning. Likewise, the benefits to libraries themselves are many: participatory design, transformation of core functions, and demonstration of library value.

The book is organized around six themes: students as employees, students as curators, students as ambassadors, the library as client, student groups as library leaders, and students as library designers. The section on students as curators, for example, contains a chapter on the student-focused “Leave Your Legacy” program at the Emporia State University (ESU) Special Collections and Archives. Collaborating with ESU’s student government, Special Collections and Archives invited students to add to the university’s legacy by donating their own personal papers for future researchers. As an example of students as ambassadors, the book highlights McGill University Library’s peer support program for international students, focused on engineering students, which offers peer-to-peer support with outreach, reference, and instruction. Duke University Libraries’ student feedback program, an example of students as library designers, has yielded student ideas involving spaces and furniture, a device lending program, more flexible room reservation policies, a more intuitive search interface, and so forth.

Each chapter lists resources for further reading, and several offer useful checklists, illustrations, diagrams, surveys, and photographs. Although this book can be profitably used to gather ideas for simple “one-off” student leadership programs, it can also serve as a springboard for more comprehensive, multiyear projects. Packed with best practices and new ideas, *Students Lead the Library* is an excellent resource for academic librarians and other higher education professionals seeking to engage their students more actively in strategic planning and new initiatives.—Jennifer A. Bartlett, *Interim Associate Dean of Teaching, Learning, and Research, University of Kentucky Libraries, Lexington, Kentucky*