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Collaborating for Success: The Whole is Equal to More than the Sum of Its Parts

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Collaborating for Success: The Whole is Equal to More than the Sum of Its Parts

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As we ponder what to write about in our role as editors of an academic journal founded on the idea that collaboration is essential, we can't help but think about how the very idea of cooperation is being rejected around the globe. In the last few weeks, the United Kingdom pulled out of the European Union (which was also founded on the notion that collaboration is essential) and in the impeachment hearings in the United States Senate, one of the two major parties decided that there was no reason to even pretend to participate in the democratic process - a process that has always involved compromise and collaboration to get things done. The President of the U.S. has pulled out of global treaties and alliances that were meant to protect the environment, to promote free trade, and to preserve worldwide peaceful engagement. We see a rise of nationalism and separatism occurring in Turkey, the Philippines, and China. All of these actions send the message that these countries (and by implication, their citizens) believe that going it alone is better than working together.

In this depressing context, we're thinking about our role in editing a journal about collaboration, and the ways in which librarians have always worked together and often in partnership with publishers and vendors to accomplish things

that wouldn't be possible otherwise. Looking outward at the world, it's hard to feel anything but pessimism about the future, but then we look towards our colleagues in libraries, and we're inspired by how cooperative efforts appear to be developing and extending in myriad ways. The [CORE initiative](#) coming out of the American Library Association's three divisions of ALCTS, LITA, and LLAMA is a prime example of librarians envisioning a new future for themselves that is reliant on cooperative activity and collaboration. It is recognized that within this new professional structure, capacity can be built for work that requires close interaction between units and information professionals yet to be determined within our home institutions.

In this issue of *Collaborative Librarianship*, librarians once again remind us why collaboration matters, why we should cooperate, why the whole is sometimes stronger than the sum of its parts. Our two From the Field reports demonstrate that collaboration can happen within a single campus or across multiple consortia. Maggie Mason Smith, Jessica L. Serrao, C. Lili Klar, DeAnna McEntire, and Anne Grant report on their experience working together as a team drawn from across the Clemson University Libraries and their success in learning from their



constituents. Meanwhile Jill Morris and Kirsten Leonard write about “Collaborating across Consortial Boundaries,” share their experiences bringing two consortia together to accomplish more than a single consortium could, and argue that it is increasingly necessary to collaborate at this interconsortial level.

There are four scholarly articles in this issue. Jeff Verbeem and Lynnette Harper describe a program at Zayed University, Dubai, in which they broadened information literacy instruction into a peer tutoring program. Nedelina Tchangalova, Eileen G. Harrington, Stephanie Ritchie, Sarah Over, and Jodi Coalter share their experience “Working across Disciplines and Library Units to Develop a Suite of Systematic Review Services for Researchers” at the University of Maryland Libraries. Mihoko Hosoi reports on a cost share model developed in the University of California Libraries that could be adapted to other consortia. Finally, Katy DiVittorio, Philip Gaddis, Sommer Browning, Molly Rainard, and Charissa Brammer describe their innovative pilot, “SILLVR: Streaming Interlibrary Loan Video Resources.” All of these papers show ways in which working together leads to more enriched outcomes and exemplify new engagement models for librarians.

In every one of these articles, librarians describe how they have worked together, often with campus or vendor partners as well, to accomplish more than they could have by working alone. This work reminds us that our impacts grow and our contributions to any given local environment are illuminated greater by our cooperative efforts. If you’re feeling as depressed as we are about the breakdown in cooperation that is occurring in our political bodies and nations, then take some time to be inspired and reinvigorated by the work of your librarian colleagues and consider sharing with us how collaboration has impacted your own practice of librarianship and led to greater impact through your cooperative work.

