

May 21, 2025

Dear Long Beach City College Library Department,

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) and its Community and Junior College Library Section (CJCLS). ACRL is committed to the advancement of library and information science professionals, and it is with great enthusiasm that we express our unequivocal support for the establishment of a bachelor's degree program in library science at Long Beach City College.

In recent years, the role of libraries has evolved significantly, necessitating a workforce that is not only passionate about serving the public but also equipped with the advanced skills and knowledge required to navigate the complexities of the modern information landscape. This is also influenced by rapid advancements in technology, the proliferation of digital resources, and the increasing diversity of library patrons. As a result, the competencies required of library staff have expanded beyond traditional cataloging, circulation, and reference services to include digital literacy, information management, and community outreach. The introduction of a bachelor's degree program in library science at your institution will address this pressing need, ensuring that future library staff are well-prepared to meet the demands of the profession.

Employment trends and statistics across the nation underscore the critical importance of advanced education for library staff. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), employment of librarians and library media specialists is projected to grow 3 percent from 2023 to 2033, which is about the average for all occupations, with about 13,300 openings projected per year. And library technicians and assistants are projected to see 26,700 openings per year. This growth is driven by the need to assist patrons in navigating the vast array of digital and print resources available, as well as the demand for programming and services that cater to diverse community needs. BLS also points out that library media specialists typically need at least a bachelor's degree for job requirements, reflecting the need for bachelor programs for the careers in the library field.

The introduction of a bachelor's degree program in library science at LBCC will have a profound and far-reaching impact on the profession. Such a program will:

- **Enhance Professional Competencies:** A bachelor's degree program will provide students with a comprehensive education that encompasses both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. This includes coursework in information technology, digital curation, metadata, information literacy instruction, and

- community engagement. Graduates will be well-equipped to handle the multifaceted roles and responsibilities needed for today's library workers.
- **Improve Employment Opportunities:** With a bachelor's degree, graduates will be better positioned to secure employment in a competitive job market. The degree will serve as a testament to their dedication and expertise, making them attractive candidates for a wide range of library positions, from public and academic libraries to special libraries and information centers.
 - **Address Workforce Shortages:** The library profession is experiencing a wave of retirements, leading to a significant demand for new, highly-qualified professionals. A bachelor's degree program will help replenish the workforce with individuals who are prepared to take on leadership roles and drive innovation within the field.
 - **Foster Lifelong Learning:** Libraries are champions of lifelong learning, and the establishment of a bachelor's degree program will embody this principle. It will encourage current library staff to pursue further education and professional development, thereby enhancing the overall quality of library services.

In conclusion, we strongly support the establishment of a bachelor's degree program in library science at LBCC. Such a program is not only timely but essential to the growth and evolution of the library profession. By equipping future library staff with the knowledge, skills, and credentials needed to succeed, we can ensure that libraries continue to thrive as vital centers of learning, innovation, and community engagement.

We commend LBCC for its commitment to advancing the field of library science. Thank you for considering our perspective on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Teresa Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "T".

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