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A library is a critically-important part of any institution of higher education. Libraries have access to resources that would be very difficult or too expensive for students and faculty to access individually, and it would not be possible for a good-quality college or university to function without one.

Unfortunately it's often difficult for library staff to quantify the work that they do, and this is where the data that's collected by the National Center for Education Statistics is invaluable. It provides libraries with a tool to demonstrate their value to their parent institutions in a way that's easily understandable by people who make budget decisions. Without this data, libraries would be limited to the information that they can gather on their own. It's highly unlikely that any individual library would have the resources to create a dataset that was anywhere near as comprehensive and useful, and it would leave library staff and administrators with fewer tools to utilize in the face of institutional budget cuts. These types of cut will reduce the quality of American educational institutions in the long term, and this is not in anyone's best interest.