

**Author Full Name :** Anonymous**Received Date :** 06/17/2024 09:55 AM**Comments Received :**

NCES, as an organization suffering from budget constraints and staffing limitations, should understand the importance of data to justify budgets and staffing to organizations such as academic libraries that have been the target of budget and staffing cuts for decades despite sharply rising costs of providing scholarly information to universities. Like NCES, libraries are undervalued and poorly understood by the larger organizations we support.

It is natural that organizations like libraries which are understaffed and comprise only a small fraction of staff at institutions that do not understand their work would not have the staff numbers to drive high usage of statistics about libraries. We are often excluded from university assessment efforts that measure student success and research outputs because university administrators are not aware of the enormous role we play in student success and research productivity. It is precisely this marginalization that means libraries need robust datasets to demonstrate our value because our organizations frequently overlook us in their data analyses.

Federal policymakers are failing in their duty to make responsible decisions regarding scholarly publishing in the United States. Unlike examples in Latin America, US publishing benefits for-profit publishers at the expense of higher education. Eliminating a place for academic libraries to report data diminishes our capacity to advocate for a sustainable system of scholarly publication in which profits from scholarly publishing are kept within higher education rather than given to for-profit publishers. If US higher education is to survive without unduly burdening students and their families with tuition hikes, we need data to justify stopping the hemorrhage of money flowing from higher education institutions that produce research to for-profit publishers and information vendors who profit from research. Just because federal policy makers are ignorant of their need for data about academic libraries, doesn't mean their decisions can be valid without library data. Higher education is facing a demographic cliff and a funding crisis and turning its back on a huge opportunity to cut expenses and reclaim revenue.

I am an academic librarian, and I am the IPEDS data reporter responsible for collecting and submitting library data to NCES. I know that many of my academic library colleagues at other institutions are also responsible for data collection for the Academic libraries section. No one else at our institutions would be qualified to collect it accurately. What evidence does NCES have that anyone other than academic librarians is collecting this data?

The fact that library personnel counts will be maintained under the SOC classifications is useless, since the reporting of librarian and library technician numbers by human resources staff is wildly different than the counts reported by librarians who have knowledge of our field.

In choosing not to support academic libraries, NCES is choosing to prey upon a vulnerable sector of higher education, already frequently taken advantage of because of its small size and relative lack of power. As a primarily female profession of individuals committed to service, librarianship is an easy target for those looking to cut costs from those who have little leverage to fight back.