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Kansas State University Libraries

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Research team receives inaugural Gail Schlachter Memorial Research Grant

BY SARAH MCGREER HOYT

A team led by Adriana Gonzalez, K-State Libraries' head of academic services, has been selected as the inaugural winner of the Gail Schlachter Memorial Research Grant. This award offers financial support to an individual or collaborative group conducting research into reference or user services.

Gonzalez's research team members include Jason Coleman, head of library user services; Ryan Otto, scholarly communication librarian; and Joelle Pitts, head of content development. Their work sits at the intersection between reference services, the subject librarian staffing model and scholarly communication.

The group intends to use collections cuts at K-State Libraries as an opportunity to explore effective communication between librarians and faculty. They will examine discussions that occur — or in some cases, don't occur — about the ongoing need to cancel resources.

During the most recent round of cuts, a survey to the faculty about titles under consideration for

cancellation during our most recent round of cuts drew more than 2,240 comments from 435 researchers on approximately 500 of the 924 titles.

"Librarians with content development responsibilities want to gather all of the feedback at their disposal when it comes to potential cancellations," Gonzalez said. "While we were pleased with the overall response to the survey this spring, there were 13 departments from which we didn't receive any responses. We want to know more about why they did not weigh in and what we can do to encourage them to join in these vital discussions."

The group plans a survey, focus groups and interviews with faculty. The Gail Schlachter Memorial Research Grant was established in memory of Gail A. Schlachter by her children, Sandy Hirsh and Eric Goldman. Schlachter worked for nearly five decades in the library and information fields as a reference librarian, library administrator, educator, author, reviewer and publisher.

THE SERIALS CRISIS

K-State Libraries currently spend about \$5 million each year on subscriptions to electronic databases and journals. However, publishers continue to increase their prices by exorbitant amounts. With average annual inflation rates of six percent, prices have become unsustainable.

As a result, libraries around the world have been forced to cancel subscriptions for several years. Gonzalez's team will make important strides toward creating effective communication practices between librarians and faculty members so everyone remains informed as difficult decisions are made.

