



**MINNESOTA LIBRARY**  
ASSOCIATION  
Academic and Research  
Library Division

September 10, 2019

Dr. Robbyn Wacker, President, St. Cloud State University  
Dr. Daniel Gregory, Provost, St. Cloud State University

CC: Dr. Rhonda Huisman, University Library Dean, St. Cloud State University  
Dr. Frances Kayona, Faculty Association President, St. Cloud State University

Dear President Wacker and Provost Gregory,

We are writing in response to the news of the retrenchment of four tenured faculty members from the library due to budget deficits. Though we are sympathetic to declining enrollment and the challenges that brings, we urge you to reconsider the value that librarians bring to your institution. The justifications cited for your decision include decreased print circulation and reference consultations, neither of which are accurate measures of the work of academic libraries at present. The modern academic library has shifted emphasis away from these services to focus on providing electronic resources which take exponentially more time and resources to process and deliver than print resources. While much of this work may be invisible to the University community, it is the backbone of academic research. Faculty librarians also are active teachers and scholars, increasing time and attention to delivering information literacy instruction. Your own University Library's activities "encompass credit courses, embedded librarian partnerships, course-specific information and digital literacy instruction, along with a suite of research services" (<https://www.stcloudstate.edu/library/about/courses.aspx>). In today's campus environments, librarians are not only vital to the shared goal of developing information literate students, they are leading these efforts. The relevance of libraries in academia and society has not declined, on the contrary, in the age of fake news and polarized civic discourse, graduating students with the capacity to critically engage with information - as students, scholars, consumers, and citizens -- is more vital than ever. The value of librarians to the academic integrity of your institution cannot be overstated. An institution without a well-resourced library with credentialed librarians is not positioned to meet your stated mission of becoming "Minnesota's 21st Century Engaged University." Furthermore, there is evidence that this decision will harm your student grades and your retention rates as engagement with the Library decreases.<sup>1</sup>

We strongly urge you to reconsider a decision that is short-sighted, not data-driven, and potentially damaging to the success of current and future students - and ultimately - your institution's mission.

Sincerely,

The Board of the Minnesota Library Association's Academic and Research Library Division /  
Minnesota Chapter of the Association of Academic and Research Libraries

Megan Kocher, Chair  
Phil Dudas, Past Chair  
Amy Mars, Chair Elect  
Jenny McBurney, Secretary

Janis Shearer, Communications Officer  
Ginny Moran, Legislative Liaison  
Allie Thome, Member-at-Large

---

<sup>1</sup>Hufford, J. R. (2013). A review of the literature on assessment in academic and research libraries, 2005 to August 2011. *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 13(1), 5-35; Soria, K. M., Fransen, J., & Nackerud, S. (2013). Library use and undergraduate student outcomes: New evidence for students' retention and academic success. *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 13(2), 147-164; Soria, K. M., Fransen, J., & Nackerud, S. (2017). The impact of academic library resources on undergraduates' degree completion. *College & Research Libraries*, 78(6), 812.; Oliveira, S. M. (2017). The academic library's role in student retention: a review of the literature. *Library Review*, 66(4/5), 310-329.