Preliminary results from a survey examining the influences that led respondents to pursue careers in library science.

The impetus behind the study is curiosity about what seems to be an inordinate number of recent graduates of Lycoming College going into library science.

- Private, liberal arts and sciences, residential college
- FTE of ~1300
- 24 degree programs (no library science)
- John G. Snowden Memorial Library
  - 5 FT professional faculty librarians, 5 FT paraprofessional staff
  - Active instruction program: 239 individualized sessions in 2015-16
  - Active outreach program: 27 events with a combined attendance of ~1165 in 2015-16
  - No formal internships in the library or college archives
- Since the 1940s, 127 Lyco-brarians that we know of
- Classes of 2000-2016, 30 Lyco-brarians

Are there common characteristics of those who choose to become professional librarians?
- Do Lyco-brarians fit those characteristics, or are they an anomaly?
- Do those who become professional, degreed librarians…
  - Gravitate to private liberal arts colleges?
  - Congregate in certain majors?
  - Have positive experiences with libraries and librarians early in life?
  - Etc.?
- Can that information be used to structure mentoring, so that future librarians are better prepared to positively impact the profession?

“The Pursuit of Librarianship” Survey
- Developed in the summer of 2016, ran from August 26-September 30
- Exploring educational experiences and other potential influences
- 1160 respondents
- Type(s) of undergraduate institutions respondents attended:
  - Private four-year college - 33%
  - Public four-year college - 32%
  - Public university - 31%
  - Community/junior college - 13%
  - Private university - 10%
Three undergraduate majors account for 60% of respondents' undergraduate degrees
- English - 29%
- History - 19%
- Education - 12%

Respondents currently work in:
- Public library - 25%
- K-12 school library - 7%
- Academic library - 59%
- Special library - 7%

57% of respondents came to library science as a second (or third) career.
Respondents decided to pursue an MLS…
- 24% decided during their undergraduate careers.
- 51% decided while in the workforce, post-bachelor degree.

Most common factors that influenced respondents’ decisions to pursue librarianship (selected all that applied; showing those that more than 30% indicated):
- Positive experiences in public libraries as a child - 64%
- Personal fervor for reading and literacy - 57%
- Personal passion for library as place - 49%
- Positive experiences in college/university libraries as a student - 45%
- Personal passion for educational mission - 45%
- Positive experiences in K-12 school libraries as a student - 33%

Are Lyco-brarians typical for those who enter the profession?
- Higher percentage of private liberal arts college attendance
  - 100% for Lyco, 33% for respondents
- Lower percentage of student employment in the library
  - 23% for Lyco, 47% for respondents
- Typical distribution of undergraduate majors:
  - English: 38% for Lyco, 29% for respondents
  - History: 24% for Lyco, 19% for respondents
  - Education: 3% for Lyco, 12% for respondents
  - Modern Languages: 13% for Lyco, 7% for respondents
  - Art/AI Art History: 10% for Lyco, 4% for respondents

Further analysis needed to determine any correlation between demographic and educational characteristics, and the influencing factors that led respondents to the profession.
- Can we draw conclusions about who might pursue the profession, and then focus our mentoring and internship opportunities on those students?
- Survey results could give libraries the evidence needed to advocate for the resources to provide:
  - Formalized mentoring
  - Internships in libraries, archives, and special collections
  - Other opportunities beyond student employment for students to be exposed to the profession in a structured way.