



Letter from the Editors

FROM THE EDITORS

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While the vision for this journal is international in scope, the plurality of our contributors and editorial team are based in the United States and acknowledge that the current political situation is complex and brings a lot of anxiety for many people. To quote ourselves from last year’s Letter from the Editors, “The rise in open expressions of homophobia and bigotry under the guise of free speech is horrifying, as is the rampant anti-intellectual, anti-education stance taken up by the far-right.” We followed that observation with a call to take a stand against bigotry and protect academic freedom. Since then, we’ve seen states pull out of the ALA (Smith 2024)¹, book bans increase, and librarians face jail time or lawsuits for providing access to books (Italie and Kruesi 2024)² while the most marginalized populations libraries serve will be under attack by the government.

We must persist in embodying radical empathy, consistently supporting marginalized populations, and engaging with our communities through outreach efforts. While many of the ideas and insights from this issue are helpful and informative, many librarians face serious risks by engaging in this kind of work. This is most evident in this issue’s “Idea Lab” which presents three stories of how legislation against diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is affecting academic librarians and the potential professional consequences for continuing to center DEI in outreach activities– as well as the possible consequences of anticipatory obedience and self-censorship.

“We must persist in embodying radical empathy, consistently supporting marginalized populations, and engaging with our communities through outreach efforts.”

As the threats to academic freedom and attacks on underrepresented communities increase, libraries should look to the American Library Association’s 2017 Resolution that libraries must be safe spaces and remember that libraries are not neutral. We must embed DEI principles in our

outreach and engagement work now more than ever. We, the editors of JLOE, will do our part by continuing to seek out and publish articles that uplift these values. We will also seek other opportunities to put theory into practice by exploring ways to reduce bias in peer review, maintaining our Pre-Peer Review program to provide support for newer authors, and changing our language to be more inclusive (goodbye double-blind peer review and hello to anonymous review!). One of these changes is transitioning from Chicago style to APA 7th edition, which simplifies citation and promotes inclusive language.

With that said, if you have a manuscript in the works or an idea you’d like to develop please reach out to us. We accept submissions year-round and preparations for the 2025 issue are already underway. We’d love to include your voice but in the meantime, please enjoy this year’s issue.

1 Smith, Tovia. 2024. “In Georgia, a Bill to Cut All Ties with the American Library Association Is Advancing.” NPR, March 3, 2024, sec. National. <https://www.npr.org/2024/03/01/1234226098/in-georgia-a-bill-to-cut-all-ties-with-the-american-library-association-is-advan>.

2 Italie, Hillel, and Kimberlee Kruesi. 2024. “Librarians Fear New Penalties, Even Prison, as Activists Challenge Books.” AP News, April 9, 2024. <https://apnews.com/article/book-bans-libraries-lawsuits-fines-prison-0914fa6cbb2a99b540cbbd28a38179b4>.