

# **Academic Libraries Survey**

**September 2006 – September 2008**

**OMB Submission**

**April 2006**

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## **A. JUSTIFICATION**

### **1. CIRCUMSTANCES MAKING COLLECTION OF INFORMATION NECESSARY**

#### **Purpose of this Submission**

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is seeking a three-year clearance to conduct the Academic Libraries Survey (ALS) in 2006 and 2008. The current clearance for the Academic Libraries Survey expired on July 30, 2005.

#### **Legislative Authorization**

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education, is conducting this study, as authorized under Section 153(a) of the *Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002* (H.R. 3801) which states:

“(a) GENERAL DUTIES.—The Statistics Center shall collect, report, analyze, and disseminate statistical data related to education in the United States and in other nations, including—(1) collecting, acquiring, compiling (where appropriate, on a State-by-State basis), and disseminating full and complete statistics (disaggregated by the population characteristics described in paragraph (3)) on the condition and progress of education, at the...postsecondary...level[s] in the United States, including data on—

(E) access to, and opportunity for, postsecondary education...”

Activities for the Academic Library Survey are included in Subsection (e) of Part 1.

#### **Prior and Related Studies**

The Academic Libraries Survey has been administered as part of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) in the past. Since 2000, the Academic Library Survey has been conducted independently of IPEDS.

### **2. PURPOSES AND USES OF THE ACADEMIC LIBRARIES SURVEY**

ALS provides NCES with the basic data needed to produce descriptive statistics for approximately 4,300 academic libraries in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the outlying areas of the United States. The ALS collects data on the libraries in the universe of 2-year and 4-year postsecondary institutions in the United States. Collection of these data will enable the nation to plan effectively for the development and use of postsecondary education library resources.

Congress uses the data to assess the need for revisions of existing legislation concerning academic libraries and academic library programs. Federal agencies that administer library grants for collections development, resource sharing and networking activities (i.e., the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), the National Library of Medicine (NLM), and the Library of Congress) require the data to evaluate the

condition of academic libraries in order to better administer their programs. State education agencies and college librarians and administrators use the data for regional and national comparisons of library resources to plan for the effective use of funds. Finally, library associations and researchers use the survey results to determine the status of academic library operations and the profession.

### **3. APPROPRIATE USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

In 2000, the ALS began using a fully automated web-based data collection of academic library data. NCES will continue to use this advanced technology to reduce respondent burden and to improve the timeliness and quality of the reported data. NCES has facilitated the cooperation of academic libraries responding to ALS in a variety of ways. These actions include:

The system will allow for direct data entry as well as file upload and batch import. Edit checks and data verification procedures will be built into the system, thus improving data quality and the efficiency of data collection by resolving errors at the time of data submission. Processing time and cost will thus be reduced. All administrative functions will be provided through the web, including nonresponse follow-up, distribution of passwords, and other activities and correspondence.

Data release will be more timely. The system is designed to migrate reported and edited data to a SQL server as soon as the administrative functions have been performed and NCES has cleared the data. Academic libraries that have completed the web application process and that have their data migrated to the SQL server will have access to data for other libraries that have also completed the process through the Peer Analysis Tool located on the NCES web site. The NCES Peer Analysis Tool will be available to responding libraries prior to survey closeout.

NCES will continue to encourage respondents to prepare academic library data in a format for uploading to the web-based collection instrument by providing detailed file specifications, instructions and recommendations for data submission.

### **4. EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY DUPLICATION**

Although there is no other national survey yielding similar in-depth data on U.S. academic libraries, there are three academic library surveys that are conducted by library associations. Since 1961, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) has conducted an annual survey of approximately 120 research libraries in the United States and Canada. ARL has given permission to two other library associations to use ARL survey items.

The Association for College and Research Libraries (ACRL), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), began conducting an annual survey of academic libraries in the United States and Canada in 1998. The ACRL survey has two parts. The first part addresses standard library operations and the survey questions come from the ARL survey. The second part is concerned with current trends in academic libraries and the survey questions change each year. The 2004 ACRL survey collected data from 1,119 libraries out of a population of 4,300 in the United States and Canada; the response rate was 36 percent.

The Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) conducts the third survey. Its annual survey is sent to member libraries that are not included in the ARL sample. The ASERL sample includes approximately 15 libraries.

NCES maintains a dialogue with state education agencies, library associations, including ARL and ACRL, and other data providers and data users concerning ALS. Relevant data sources within NCES and other federal agencies and programs are also reviewed on a continuing basis. ALS is a national survey, conducted by NCES, and therefore, is held to the highest statistical standards. The 2004 ALS achieved a response rate of 87 percent.

ALS presents opportunities for historical and trend analysis because ALS and its antecedents (IPEDS and HEGIS) have collected information on all U.S. academic libraries for 30 years. The association with IPEDS has also added depth to the ALS because it allows an analysis of academic libraries in the context of the colleges and universities of which they are a part. Therefore, NCES asserts that ALS represents a unique source of data on academic and research libraries for library professionals, federal and state policymakers, and the public.

#### **5. METHODS USED TO MINIMIZE BURDEN ON SMALL ENTITIES**

Certain academic libraries are considered small entities. To reduce the burden on these small entities, NCES works with ALA, ACRL, and ARL to assure the appropriateness of data being requested. The technical working group also considers the feasibility of collecting certain items.

Adopting the changes in data elements and definitions for the 2006 and 2008 ALS will maintain the individual burden for respondents by clarifying the survey form and enhancing the definitions.

#### **6. FREQUENCY OF DATA COLLECTION**

The Academic Libraries Survey is a biennial survey. The next administration of the survey will begin in November 2006.

#### **7. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF DATA COLLECTION**

There are no circumstances that will require special data collection efforts.

## 8. CONSULTANTS OUTSIDE THE AGENCY

In addition to review within NCES, the following individuals from the U.S. Census Bureau reviewed data collection methods and content:

Adrienne Oneto  
Assistant Division Chief for Special Statistics, Governments Division

Johnny Monaco  
Chief, Education & Related Statistics Branch, Governments Division

Patricia Garner O'Shea  
Director of Library Surveys, Governments Division

Carma Hogue  
Chief, Statistical Support & Consulting Staff, ESMPD Division

Terri Craig  
Math Statistician, ESMPD Division

Joanna F. Lineback McLaughlin  
Math Statistician, ESMPD Division

The Academic Libraries Survey Technical Working Group provided recommendations on survey content. The committee is composed of the following members:

Denise Davis	Director, Office for Research and Statistics, ALA
Brinley Franklin	Director of Library Services, University of Connecticut Libraries
Victoria Hanawalt	Library Director, Reed College
Neal Kaske	Director, Statistics and Surveys, NCLIS
Martha Kyrillidou	Senior Program Officer, Statistics and Measurement, ARL
Leslie Manning	Dean of Library, University of Colorado
Carolyn Norman	Specialist, Instructional Resources and Technology, California Community Colleges
Rita Pellen	Assistant University Librarian, Florida Atlantic University
Patricia Profeta	Assistant Dean, Library, Indian River Community College
Hugh Thompson	Director of Publications, ACRL

Notice of this proposed data collection was published in the 60 day FR on May 2, 2006. We received no substantive public comment.

## **9. PROVISION OF PAYMENTS OR GIFTS TO RESPONDENTS**

There are no payments or gifts offered to survey respondents.

## **10. ASSURANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

A plan for assuring the confidentiality of individual data has been developed by NCES and the Census Bureau. Under this plan, the ALS will conform to the three federal laws that protect the confidentiality of all individually identifiable information collected by NCES: the *National Education Statistics Act of 1994*, as amended, the *Privacy Act of 1974*, and the *Computer Security Act of 1987*. These laws prohibit producing any publication in which data furnished by any particular individual can be identified or permitting any person not authorized by the NCES Commissioner to examine any individual data or reports. A violation of any of these restrictions is a felony, punishable by imprisonment of up to five years, and a fine up to \$250,000.

The Census Bureau will collect the data under an interagency agreement with NCES by the authority of Section 406(b) and (c) of the *General Education Provisions Act*, as amended (20 USC 1221e). The Census Bureau will maintain the individually identifiable questionnaires as confidential material. From the initial contact with the participants in this survey through all of the follow-up efforts, careful attention will be paid to informing potential survey respondents that NCES and the Census Bureau will protect the confidentiality of their personal data. On the final edited file, for all institutions where any data reported for staff is equal to or less than two, the data for salaries and wages and benefits will be suppressed. The data will only be reported in statistical summaries that preclude the identification of any individual library staff participating in the survey.

Patricia Garner O'Shea is currently the director of the Academic Libraries Survey. Her successful completion of the Census Bureau's Title 13: Safeguarding Census Confidential Data course is indicated by the attached certificate, dated October 25, 2005.

## **11. SENSITIVE QUESTIONS**

The ALS questionnaire contains several items about income and benefits. Although income and benefits data are reported for the entire library and not specific individuals employed by the library, some academic libraries have small staffs and it may be possible to determine an individual's income from the data reported to ALS. It is the opinion of NCES that federal regulations governing the administration of sensitive questions must be applied to ALS. The federal regulations require (a) clear documentation of the need for such information as it relates to the primary purpose of the study, (b) provisions to respondents which clearly inform them of the voluntary nature of participation in the study, and (c) assurances of confidential treatment of responses.

The collection of data related to income is central to understanding key policy issues driving this study. The recruitment of professional and support staff and the retention of experienced librarians are related to the salary and benefits offered by an academic library. In Part B, there are several items that request data on salaries and wages for the librarians and other professional staff, all other paid staff,



student assistants, and the total number of full-time FTEs. There is also a question about the expenditures for employee fringe benefits.

The cover letter will explain that the collection of salary and benefits data is important to the survey. Respondents will also be informed that the survey is voluntary. The cover letter will also assure respondents that the confidentiality of salary and benefits data will be protected when the FTEs within a staffing category are less than or equal to two.

## **12. ESTIMATES OF HOUR BURDEN FOR INFORMATION COLLECTION**

The total number of burden hours is estimated to be 5,393. The total burden for ALS information collection is estimated to be 1 hour and 40 minutes per respondent at 3,236 academic libraries, which assumes a response rate of 87 percent.

The standard NCES procedure for estimating cost is to multiply the estimated total survey reporting hours by the average salary and associated computer costs of \$23.10 per hour. The respondent dollar cost is estimated to be \$124,578. Respondents to the ALS will not incur any costs other than of their time to respond.

## **13. ESTIMATES OF COSTS**

No additional costs will be imposed on our respondents, other than those reported in Section 12, Estimates of Hour Burden for Information Collection.

## **14. COSTS TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

An estimate of the total cost of the ALS for the Census Bureau for the 2006 survey is \$580,000. The Census Bureau estimates were compiled from individual estimates developed within each division involved in the survey. Estimates were based on survey administration, data review and imputations and include administrative overhead and personnel costs.

The cost of the web survey instrument is not included in the Census Bureau's costs. A contractor will develop the web survey instrument, at a cost of approximately \$50,000. The NCES personnel costs will be approximately \$110,000 for the 2006 ALS.

## **15. REASONS FOR CHANGES IN RESPONSE BURDEN AND COSTS**

This collection is showing a 5,393 program change because this is a reinstatement of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired. Despite the increase in burden due to this reinstatement, there are a number of changes that have been made to this collection that actually reflect a reduction in burden over the previous ALS 2004 collections. Those improvements and changes are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

This collection is showing a reduction in burden of 547 hours over the previous collection in 2004. This reduction is the result of improvements in the survey, and a refined estimate of the size of the universe. The changes are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

Instructions have been simplified for the 2006 ALS, and some labeling and location changes have been made to improve clarity. Five items on consortial services are being dropped from Part G. of the 2006 survey. One item is being added to the 2006 ALS; it appears in Part H and addresses the academic library's role in providing information literacy instruction. It is increasingly important in an information economy that students become skillful at conducting research; finding, evaluating, and analyzing information; and developing critical thinking skills, all aspects of information literacy. This additional item is answered yes or no and requires little time to complete.

The reduction in questionnaire items is estimated to decrease the response burden by 5 minutes per respondent. The burden estimate is further reduced by using an estimate of the number of respondents, based on the 2004 ALS, rather than the broader 2005 IPEDS database. The combination of a shorter survey and a more accurate estimate of survey respondents represents a total burden reduction of 557 hours per survey administration, from 5,950 hours in 2004 to 5,393 hours for 2006.

#### **16. TIME SCHEDULE FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES SURVEY**

User IDs and Passwords issued	November 8, 2006
Registration and software release	November 22, 2006
Data collection	November 22, 2006 to March 14, 2007
Non-response follow-up	December 8, 2006 to March 14, 2007
Edit review	November 22, 2006 to June 15, 2007
Preliminary file	August 24, 2007
Final file	December 28, 2007 to January 4, 2008
Final ED Tabs run	March 16, 2008
Final ED Tabs released	September 25, 2008

#### **17. APPROVAL TO NOT DISPLAY EXPIRATION DATE FOR OMB APPROVAL**

We are not seeking approval to not display the expiration date of OMB approval.

#### **18. EXCEPTIONS TO CERTIFICATION FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSIONS**

There are no exceptions to the topics in Item 19 of Form OMB 83-1.

