**Information Letter**

**Project Title:** Call for participation: What is the New Normal? Changing Nature of Academic Library Work in a post-COVID World

**Principal Investigators:** Lori Birrell and Amy Allen

This form describes a research project that Principal Investigator, Lori Birrell and Co-Investigator, Amy Allen from the University of Arkansas University Libraries are conducting in order to understand what the experience of remote work has been for employees working in academic libraries during COVID-19.

The study involves emailing a survey through American Library Association listservs, which will take approximately fifteen (15) minutes to complete. The PIs estimates that between 100-1,000 people will participate and complete the survey.  Participants will also be given the option at the end of the survey to give their email addresses if they are interested in participating in future surveys, to be sent out in 3, 6, and 12 months after the first survey period ends. It is anticipated that 1,000 practitioners will take part in this phase of the study.

Many, if not most, employees in academic libraries transitioned to working remotely for the first time in their careers in March 2020. Understanding that employees have been working remotely within the context of a global pandemic in which many of us juggle childcare, work duties, and possibly family or personal illness, in the midst of economic uncertainty, this survey seeks to understand librarians’ experiences with remote work.

The research questions for this study are: How does working remotely impact communication channels and culture within academic libraries? What sectors of academic librarianship most easily flex to remote work? How does working remotely impact practitioners' perception of work/life balance? Could the experience of working remotely impact practitioners' expectations for that kind of flexibility going forward?

We would like you to complete the whole survey, but you can skip any of the questions you do not want to answer. Some of the survey questions may be upsetting or make you feel uncomfortable. All of the information we collect will be stored in a secure manner and only study team members will have access to it. The University of Arkansas makes every effort to keep the information collected from you private. All the information received from you will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy, and will be stored on a password protected local (non-networked) hard drive.  You will not be identified nor will any information that would make it possible for anyone to identify you be used in any presentation or written reports concerning this project.  Only summarized data will be presented in any oral or written reports.

**Your participation in this project is completely voluntary.**  You are free not to participate or to withdraw at any time, for whatever reason, without risk.  No matter what decision you make, there will be no penalty or impact to your employment. The Institutional Review Board of the University of Arkansas approved this study.

For more information or questions about this research you may contact Lori Birrell at   
479-575-8443, [lbirrell@uark.edu](mailto:lbirrell@uark.edu) or Amy Allen at 479-575-6370, [ala005@uark.edu](mailto:ala005@uark.edu). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact Ro Windwalker, the IRB Compliance Coordinator at the University of Arkansas, at 479-575-2208 or irb@uark.edu.