



2022 VALE Users Conference – VALE Update/Chair’s Remarks

Happy New Year and welcome to the 23rd annual VALE Conference. We’ve retired the alphabet soup “VALE / ACRL-NJ / NJLA CUS” title of the conference and it is now, officially, simply the **2022 New Jersey Academic Libraries Conference**. This year themed: “The Importance of Now: Rethink, Refocus, Recover.” In my remarks for last year’s conference I said “...following a year like none other we’ve experienced.” Well, make that two. Conference planning is never easy. Last year Amanda Piekart and Alyssa Valenti co-chaired the Conference Planning Committee and adroitly pivoted us into a Zoom format at the 11th hour. This year’s committee, co-chaired by Hilary Westgate, Ramapo College and Alyssa Valenti, Raritan Valley Community College decided that, despite a trend in mid-2021 for events to resume in-person format, to plan the NJALC Conference to be done via Zoom. As much as everyone would have loved to return to our traditional format and location for our conference, they made a tough call. I congratulate Hilary and Alyssa for their prescient leadership in choosing the modality that ensures our collective health and safety. Well done!

Among the others we have lost this year, VALE lost one of its own, David Hoover, in December 2021. Dave was an essential member of the Rutgers University systems management operation, and VALE was fortunate to have him as a contributor to its operations. Dave’s presence and expertise helped us to recognize and address issues and be a smarter organization. His enthusiasm and personality will be missed by his many colleagues and friends.

VALE’s core mission, throughout its 23 years, has been to bring its members advantageous pricing for databases. We have continued this. In FY 21 VALE sold 671 subscriptions to products totaling \$4,001,647. In FY 22 we sold 692 subscriptions totaling \$4,213,886. VALE’s business and its value to its members **increased 5.3% this year**. I’d like to specifically thank VALE’s Purchasing and Licensing Committee: Judy Cohn, Rutgers University; Ann Hoang, NJIT; Richard Kearney, William Paterson University; and Melissa Lena, VALE Program Manager. Each product VALE offers goes through a thorough license review process with legal counsel to achieve the best terms and conditions for our members, including ADA Section 508 accessibility compliance.

I would like to especially thank Melissa Lena for her work over the past year. Along with her work with the Purchasing & Licensing Committee, she coordinates and participates on all the

other VALE committees: Outreach, Planning and Assessment, and Open Educational Resources. Throughout 2021 Melissa hosted Zoom drop-in forums, so that members could have a place to share and discuss their experiences during these challenging times. I'm sure you will all agree that these forums were useful and, more than any email or web announcement could do, emphasized that VALE is composed of people working to make our libraries better for our users. Through Melissa's efforts and as I mentioned above, we increased our offerings with the recent additions of Infobase Films on Demand collections of streaming video, the Sage Video collection, Springshare's LibApps suite of resources such as LibGuides, LibAnswers, LibCal, LibStaffer, LibWizard and E-Reserves, RapidILL, the StackMap utility, and new this year – Unsub, a dashboard that allows users to analyze periodical subscription packages and better understand cancellation options. Thank you, Melissa, for your hard work to ensure that VALE remains a great value to its members.

Perhaps most helpful to me at VALE are my colleagues on the Executive Committee. I'd like to thank them: Ed Chapel, Edge; Judy Cohn, Rutgers University; Rob Hilliker, Rowan University; Ann Hoang, NJIT; Melissa Lena, VALE; Juliet Machie, NJLA; Margaret Nizolek, NJ State Library; Marilyn Ochoa, Middlesex County College; Edward Owusu-Ansah, William Paterson University; Taras Pavlovsky, TCNJ; and Donna Rosinski-Kaus, Ocean County College. I want to also thank our new members of the Committee: Ralph Bingham, Executive Director of LibraryLinkNJ; Ana Fontoura, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Janet Hauge, Atlantic Cape Community College; and Dorianne Mizzy, Montclair State University. I said last year that your leadership, experience, imagination and collegiality were a bright light in an evil year. I can't think of anything better to say than that. Thank you for keeping that light shining.

I hope that this year's NJAL Conference has been useful to you. As our theme this year "The Importance of Now: Rethink, Refocus, Recover" implies, we are called on to consider all the changes we've experienced through the pandemic. Some of the changes over the past year and a half are temporary, but some will be lasting. As an institution already confronted with extraordinary change over the past 25 years, libraries endure. We will learn from these experiences, adapt to new realities, and continue to bring resources and services to our users in innovative ways.

I wish you a healthy and safe 2022!

Kurt W. Wagner
Chair, VALE Executive Committee
January 7, 2022