

The Impact of Academic Library Expenditure on College Graduation Rates

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ABSTRACT

Some higher education institutions have announced plans for cutting funding for academic libraries in response to fiscal difficulties. However, academic libraries provide essential resources and experiences for college students, and a number of studies have investigated how institutional expenditure for academic libraries is associated with student graduation. Yet, these studies are limited in that they only examine cross-sectional correlations, do not control for other factors that can influence student success, or only examine a relatively small number of institutions. To address these limitations, we use longitudinal data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS) to analyze the relationship between institutional expenditure on academic libraries and student graduation rates. In particular, we examine how library expenditure is associated with not just overall graduation rates, but the graduation rates of low-income students (i.e., recipients of the federal Pell Grant). Preliminary results indicate that institutional expenditure for academic libraries is positively associated with both overall student graduation rates and the graduation rates of low-income students, net of multiple institutional characteristics linked to graduation rates. Our findings support the importance of investing in academic libraries for student success and evidence against the budget cut of academic libraries. Our study also sheds light on academic libraries' relevance for the performance of low-income students in universities.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Academic libraries; Students; Administration.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

IPEDS; library expenditure; graduation rate; student success.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21900/j.alise.2023.1263>