

## FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

# *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 2026 Johns Hopkins University Press Award for Best Article

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**Eamon Tewell and Ellysa Stern Cahoy**

The editorial board of *portal: Libraries and the Academy* is pleased to announce “A Comprehensive Study of Library-Led Textbook Affordability Initiatives in the United States,” by Mitchell Scott and Rachel Scott, as the recipient of the Johns Hopkins University Press Award for the best article published in the journal during 2025. The article was named as the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual recipient of the award following a thorough assessment of all articles published in Volume 25 and an online voting process among editorial board members. The winning article appears in Volume 25, Number 3, pages 471-507, and is available at <http://muse.jhu.edu/pub/1/article/964601>. The authors will each receive a commemorative item and a \$250 cash prize for each author from the Johns Hopkins University Press.

This multi-modal study by Mitchell Scott and Rachel Scott uses survey data and individual interviews to explore academic library-led textbook affordability initiatives across the United States. The findings, from academic librarians representing a range of institution types across the US, highlight the diversity of approaches and challenges involved in establishing and sustaining these programs, as well as their alignment with broader academic library and higher education goals. The study highlights recent significant growth in the number and scale of textbook affordability initiatives, as well as creative strategies librarians use to fund these programs. Noting positive reception of textbook affordability initiatives, the authors find that textbook affordability programs exist along a continuum of development, ranging from early implementation to ongoing refinement and expansion through campus partnerships. They emphasize the scalability and adaptability of these programs and encourage academic librarians who may be hesitant to adopt them to consider textbook programs’ strategic campus value and potential educational and economic impact.



The editorial board appreciated the exploration of this important topic in higher education, which is understudied, timely, and widely applicable to academic libraries, as well as the article itself as well-crafted, practical, and thorough work. The authors' literature review of library-led textbook affordability initiatives and related factors such as workflows, funding, and vendor issues, along with a robust methodology, gave insight into the past, present, and future of an issue that is critical to academic libraries' missions of access and equity.

A board member shared, "This article is so thorough and thoughtfully done, as well as being of practical use. Many libraries purchase textbooks, but this article displays the wide variety of processes and policies for these programs. It demonstrates the need for more sharing of information at the same time that it begins to fill this gap. Librarians don't get enough chances to discuss in detail how we conduct regular operations, and this article helps us learn about each other's work." Another board member praised the article as a "meticulous exploration of a timely, relevant, and impactful subject." Yet another mentioned, "I have often struggled to understand and navigate the issues [the authors] discuss, and they provide clarifying context and insight."

Thank you to the members of the 2026 Best Article Award Committee: Eamon Tewell (chair), Julie Porterfield, and Seti Keshmiripour who thoughtfully led the board's evaluation and selection process. Thank you to Carmen Cole for her initial work participating in the Award Committee as well. Additional thanks to Eamon Tewell for co-authoring this Best Article Award announcement and to our publisher, Bill Breichner and the Johns Hopkins University Press, for continuing their longstanding support of *portal's* annual Best Article Award.

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