

Santa Fe College Receives 2015 ACRL Excellence in Academic Libraries Award

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The Santa Fe College Lawrence W. Tyree library started the year with distinguished accolades awarded by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), the higher education association for librarians, and YBP Library Services. SF took home the prize in the community college category and joined Amherst College and Purdue University in the college and university category.

According to ACLR Executive Director Mary Ellen K. Davis, receiving an Excellence in Academic Libraries Award is a national tribute to each library and its staff for outstanding services, programs, and leadership. The ACLR has been dedicated to professional development and networking for 75 years.

"There is no greater recognition than that of your peers, and people who aren't in the library field have no idea just how big this is!" said SF Library Director, Myra Sterrett. She plans to get the word out by proudly displaying a banner on the library porch that will soon be designed to share the news of this award with staff, students and community. She will also share the news at several state conferences including the Florida Association of Colleges and Research Libraries, the Association of Florida Colleges, and the League for Innovation.

Last fall, every library associated with top-ten status from the Aspen Institute was invited to apply for the award. A letter from the president urged that institutions holding the top-ten status would surely be competitive in this award.

To capitalize on this honor, Steven Bell, chair of the 2015 Excellence in Academic Libraries Committee and associate university librarian for research and instructional services at Temple University, called this a "model" program.

"What he said about the recipients was all positive, but absolutely glowing for us—indeed this is high praise coming from him," Sterrett stated.

Sterrett remembers coming to SF 13 years ago, just about a week after current SF President Jackson Sasser. She came from the University of Florida Health Sciences Library. When she got to SF there was no funding for databases for students. So, she picked up the phone and called on Dr. Sasser to share in her vision, for which he immediately responded with full support, and has continued to do so—there has never been a budget cut that was specific to the library. Sterrett said this type of support is not the case for many other institutions.

The SF Library will be awarded \$3,000 in recognition of this prize. Sterrett said there has been heavy discussion on how to best put these funds to use, but no conclusions just yet. The ACRL will also fund the travel of the ACLR president and a representative of the company to present the check. Sterrett would like to think of this more as a "celebration" rather than an award ceremony, and is excited that Dr. Sasser is so eager to share in the momentous occasion.

Sterrett has received congratulatory letters and emails from all over the nation. Receiving such support has made a difference to her and the library staff.

"We make a difference in people that otherwise wouldn't have a chance; we take them from where they are to where they want to be," Sterrett said with a proud smile on her face.



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