

# KNOWLEDGE RIVER SCHOLARS PROGRAM IMPACT REPORT

2020-2024



[infosci.arizona.edu/knowledge-river](https://infosci.arizona.edu/knowledge-river)



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

College of  
Information Science





**The Knowledge River Scholars Program supports the education, recruitment and retention of library and information professionals dedicated to serving the needs of their local communities.**

As a national exemplar in library and information science education, Knowledge River reflects and supports communities through intentional teaching, research and service. The KR program focuses on discussion and action to improve services for communities in libraries, archives, museums and other information environments.

Historically rooted in groundbreaking initiatives for the advancement of cultural heritage preservation in libraries and archives, we continue to grow, reflect and support the wide array of communities in information science.

“*Being a Knowledge River scholar has been life changing. KR is the main reason I am a successful librarian today.*”

– MAGALI SANCHEZ  
Knowledge River Scholar, MLIS '20



**CATHERINE F. BROOKS**  
INTERIM DEAN AND PROFESSOR  
COLLEGE OF INFORMATION SCIENCE

# DEAN'S WELCOME

## A RICH LEGACY AND A PROMISING FUTURE

### DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the *Knowledge River Scholars Program Impact Report*, with a particular focus on students and graduates from 2020 to 2024. As interim dean of the College of Information Science, I am both humbled and inspired by the legacy and ongoing promise of this nationally recognized program. For over two decades, Knowledge River has stood as a beacon for access and cultural responsiveness in the library and information professions, preparing generations of students to serve and lead in communities that have too often been underserved and overlooked.

We find ourselves at a particularly complex moment in the history of libraries, archives and information institutions. Across the country, vital federal funding that once sustained programs like ours has been significantly reduced or eliminated, putting pressure on institutions to do more with less. And yet, even in this moment of constraint, the Knowledge River Scholars Program continues to thrive—thanks to the leadership of program director Berlin Loa as well as our other faculty, the dedication of our students, the passion of our alumni and the steadfast generosity of donors and partners like you.

In these pages, you will read about the far-reaching impact of the program—on individuals, communities and the broader profession. You'll read testimonials of resilience, leadership and transformation. These stories of Knowledge River students and alumni remind us that the mission of equitable access to information is not just alive—it is evolving, and it is in capable hands.

As we look ahead, we invite you to join us in shaping the future of Knowledge River. Your support—whether as a mentor, advocate or donor—ensures that this program not only endures but continues to set the standard for excellence in the field. Thank you for believing in our scholars, and in the power of knowledge to change lives and communities.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine F. Brooks".

Interim Dean and Professor  
College of Information Science  
The University of Arizona



# KNOWLEDGE RIVER BY THE NUMBERS

**51**

GRADUATES FROM  
**2020 TO 2024**



**269**

GRADUATES SINCE  
PROGRAM INCEPTION  
(through Fall 2024)

**\$1.19M**

TOTAL AWARDED GRANTS  
AND OTHER FUNDING  
**2020 TO 2024**



**\$6.46M**

TOTAL AWARDED GRANTS  
AND OTHER FUNDING  
SINCE 2001

**\$900K**

AWARDED TO STUDENTS  
FOR GAs, TUITION REMISSION,  
TUITION BENEFITS  
AND SCHOLARSHIPS  
**2020 TO 2024**



**\$4.62M**

AWARDED TO STUDENTS  
FOR GAs, TUITION REMISSION,  
TUITION BENEFITS  
AND SCHOLARSHIPS  
SINCE 2001

## KNOWLEDGE RIVER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Support the Knowledge River Scholarship fund by visiting:

[infosci.arizona.edu/support-kr](https://infosci.arizona.edu/support-kr)



# Cultivating Community-Rooted Leaders in Libraries, Archives and Beyond

The Knowledge River Scholars Program specializes in educating library and information professionals through professional development and practical experience. Knowledge River cultivates understanding of library and information challenges and respect for vernacular knowledge, and supports preservation and access to a range of information, data and cultural heritage resources. KR scholars address the wide range of information and literacy needs within local communities.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF KNOWLEDGE RIVER

Founded in 2001 through substantial support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the Knowledge River Scholars Program began as the Knowledge River Institute, established as a groundbreaking initiative to increase representation in and access to library and information science education. Originally a collaboration between the School of Information Resources and Library Science (now the College of Information Science), the University of Arizona Libraries and later the Arizona Health Sciences Library, the program was led in its formative years by Patricia Tarin, whose vision and leadership earned national recognition, including the American Library Association's Elizabeth Futas Catalyst for Change Award.

The KR Institute pioneered a holistic approach to library and information science education for Hispanic, Native American and other underrepresented students. It blended financial support, a residential cohort model, culturally responsive curriculum, mentorship from national leaders and extensive professional development. Many Knowledge River graduates have gone on to shape the profession as librarians, archivists, educators and advocates across the country. By the end of 2024 there were 269 graduates, with overlapping cohorts averaging 12 new students per semester.

The program has evolved into a nationally acclaimed model for inclusive library and information science education that is guided by a community-informed planning process, including a national advisory board of 13 members. We continue to grow under the stewardship of faculty leadership in collaboration with libraries and organizations across the state. Since Tarin, Knowledge River directors have included Jana Bradley, Sandy Littletree and Gina Macaluso. Since 2019, the program has been directed by University of Arizona Associate Professor of Practice Berlin Loa.

While federal support has fluctuated, the program's commitment to access and community-centered librarianship remains unwavering. Today, it stands as both a tribute to its roots and a forward-looking catalyst for positive change in library science and information.

## COMMITMENTS THAT GUIDE KNOWLEDGE RIVER

- » Focus on cultural respect as a core goal for the College of Information Science and constituencies—with Knowledge River as the flagship of this effort.
- » Recruit an annual cohort of Knowledge River scholars from historically underrepresented communities in library science.
- » Expand and enhance curriculum development within library and information science education and service.
- » Extend focus on library and community outreach through service assistantships and other means.
- » Increase cultural awareness, respect and fluency among all.
- » Engage past cohorts to build support for Knowledge River scholars and to further the goals of the Knowledge River Scholars Program.
- » Inform the library and information science field in the needs, issues and impact of diversity through research and public information.

## CURRENT AND RECENT PARTNERS

- » Institute of Museum and Library Services
- » University of Arizona Libraries
- » Arizona Health Sciences Library
- » Pima County Public Library
- » Arizona State Library
- » Arizona State University Library

## NOTABLE AWARDS

- » 2024 University of Arizona Hispanic Serving Institution Evidence Based Practice Award
- » 2022 Excelencia in Education What Works for Latino Student Success Finalist
- » 2015 University of Arizona Peter W. Likins Inclusive Excellence Award
- » 2007 American Library Association Elizabeth Futas Catalyst for Change Award (Patricia Tarin, Knowledge River Institute Director)



# OUR IMPACT ON STUDENTS

Since 2001, 284 students have participated in the Knowledge River Scholars Program. It is among the nation's first and foremost graduate programs for training librarians and information specialists. KR scholars work to provide equitable and quality information environments and resources in their local communities as well as nationally and internationally. The impact of the program on participating students is substantial—and in many cases, life-changing.

## The Knowledge River Scholar Experience

Knowledge River scholars graduate with the top-ranked University of Arizona Master of Arts in Library and Information Science.

In addition to their regular studies, Knowledge River scholars receive:

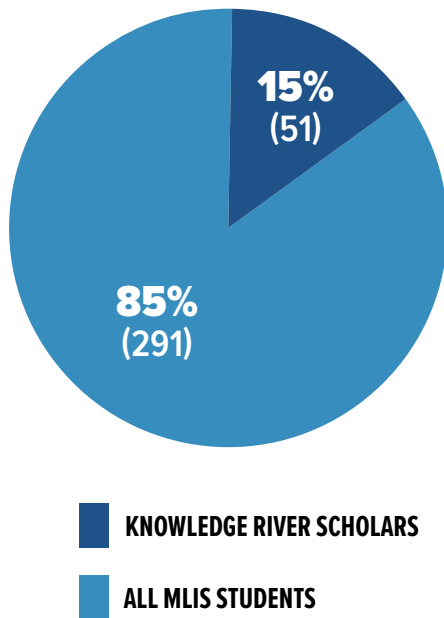
- Opportunities for academic financial support
- Specialized advising
- Participation in a cohort-based learning community
- Mentorship
- Access to a network of Knowledge River alumni
- Professional development activities

Selection to the Knowledge River Scholars Program is competitive.

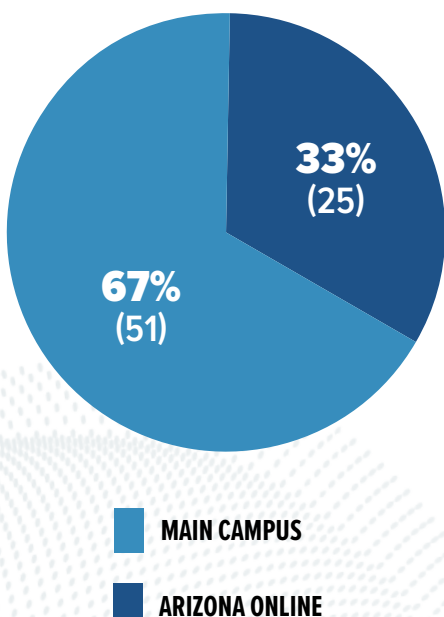
“*Being a Knowledge River scholar changed my life! I owe my career and livelihood to Knowledge River.*”

— LIZ GARCIA  
Knowledge River Scholar, MLIS '21

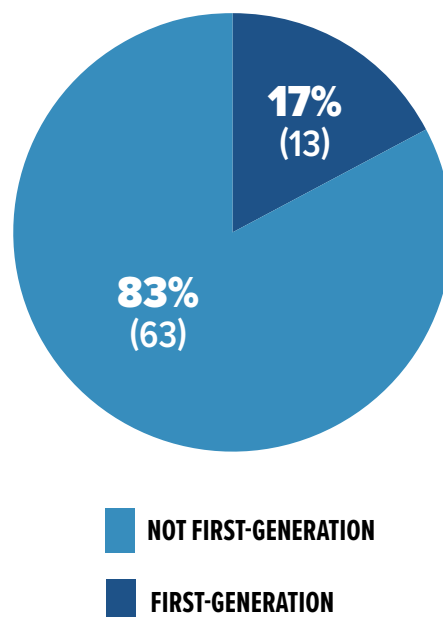
## MA IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE DEGREES AWARDED 2020-2024



## KNOWLEDGE RIVER ENROLLMENT BY CAMPUS 2020-2024\*



## KNOWLEDGE RIVER FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS 2020-2024\*



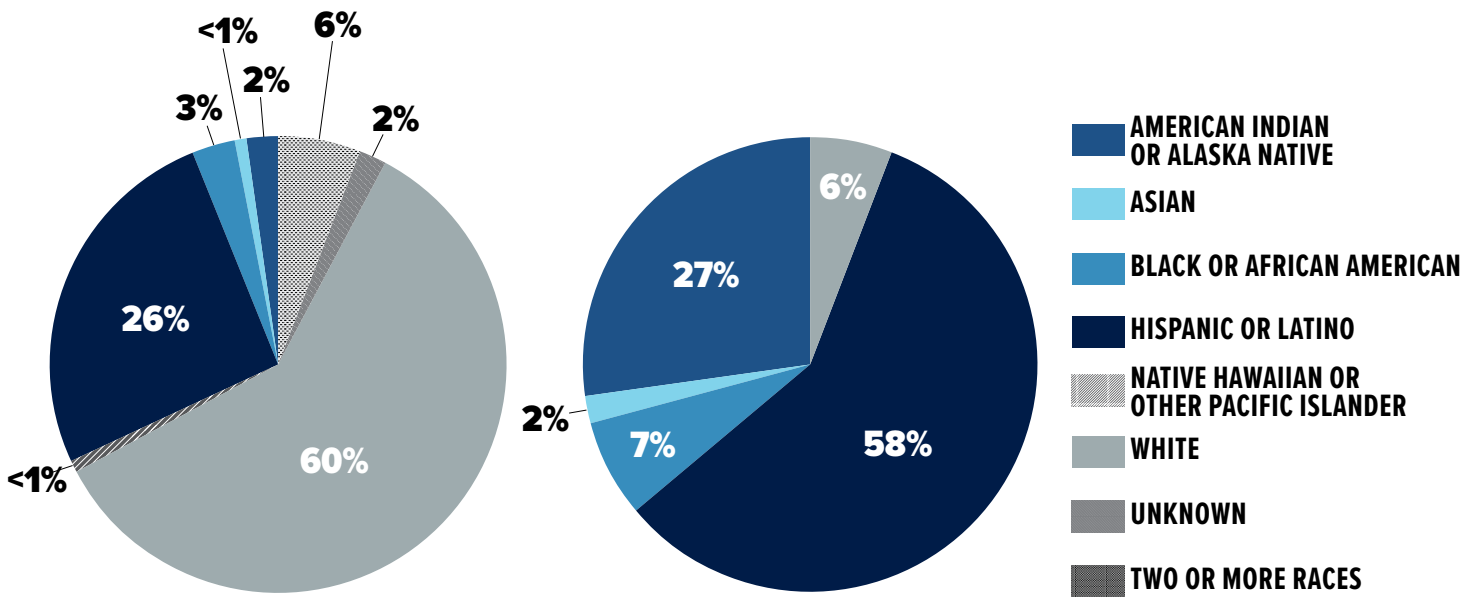
\*Includes Knowledge River scholars enrolled at the end of 2024.

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# 2020-2024 Knowledge River Demographics

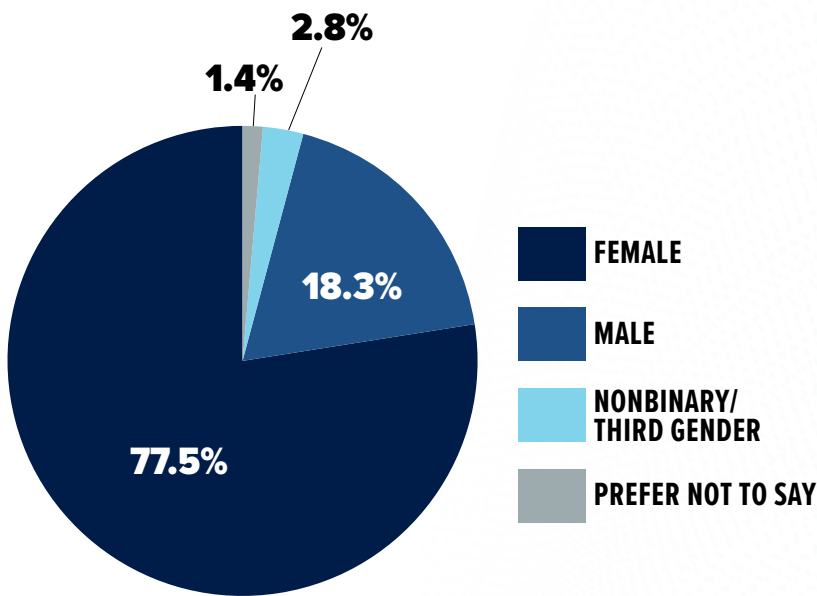
## RACE OR ETHNICITY



ALL MASTER OF ARTS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE STUDENTS 2020-2024

KR PROGRAM 2020-2024

## GENDER IDENTITY



“Being a Knowledge River scholar has been the single most valuable thing that has happened to me both personally and professionally. It was invaluable to obtaining both of the positions I have held since graduation.”

— RUBY L. NUGENT  
Knowledge River Scholar, MLIS '19





“*Knowledge River has been helpful in more ways than I could ever explain. Without KR, I would have second-guessed my career choice, but because of the program I realize how important I am to the profession. Because of Knowledge River, we are creating a place to belong in the library and information science profession.*”

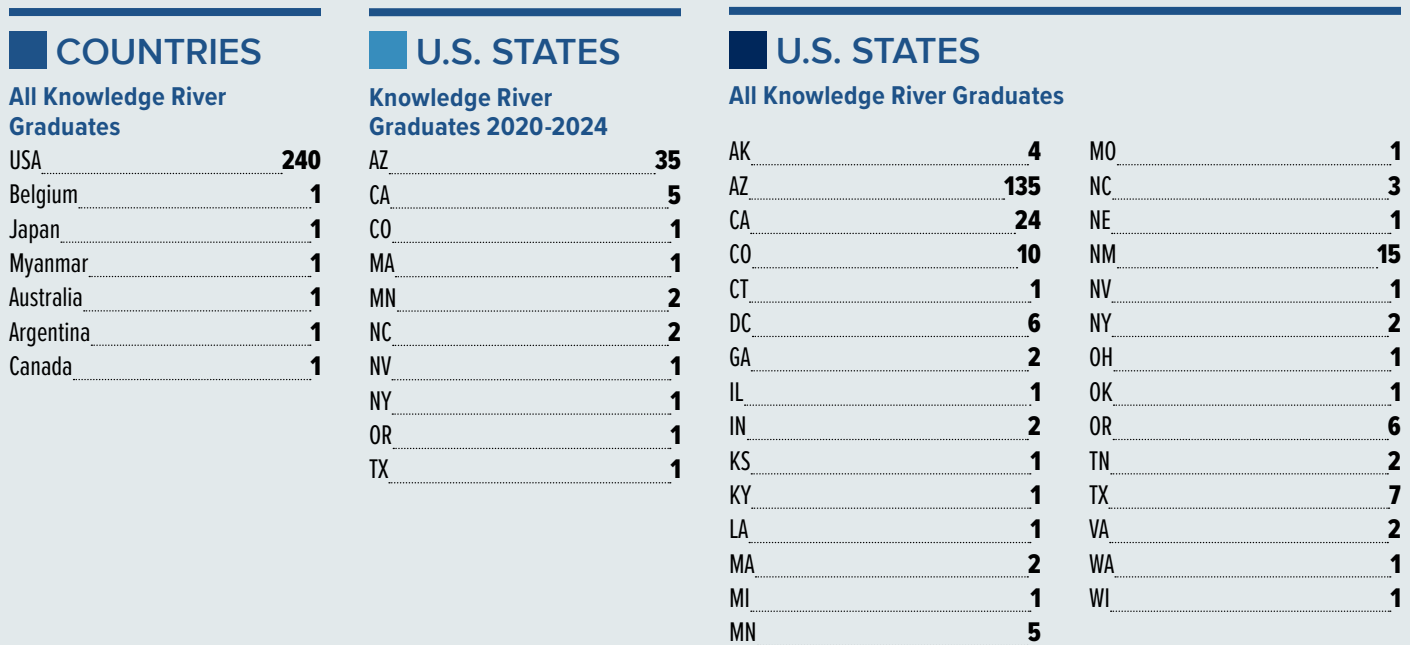
— JOEANA D. PAYTE  
Knowledge River Scholar, MLIS '24

## OUR IMPACT ON ALUMNI

Since graduating, Knowledge River alumni have gone on to build impactful, fulfilling careers across the information field—from public libraries and academic institutions to archives, government agencies and international organizations.

For many, the program served as a critical launchpad, offering not only a graduate degree but also the confidence, network and experience to pursue leadership roles and specialized positions.

Their stories reflect a consistent theme: Knowledge River didn't just open doors—it helped our graduates recognize they belong in the room.

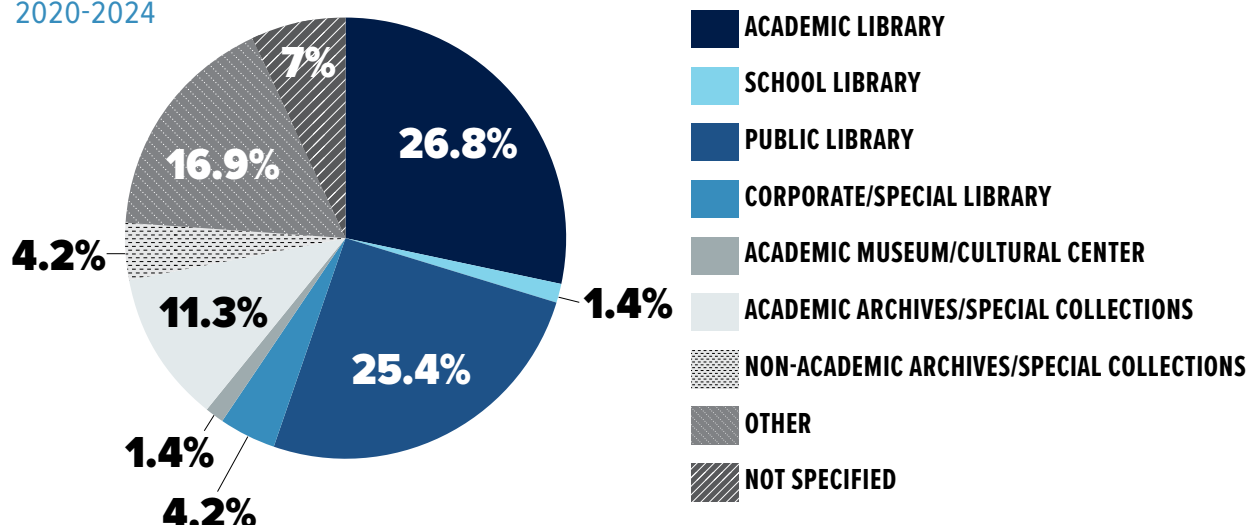


# Knowledge River Graduate Employment

Knowledge River Scholar Program graduates are reshaping the information landscape, bringing their expertise to a wide spectrum of institutions—from bustling public libraries and research-driven academic centers to specialized archives and cultural organizations—demonstrating both the versatility of their training and the growing demand for culturally competent information professionals.

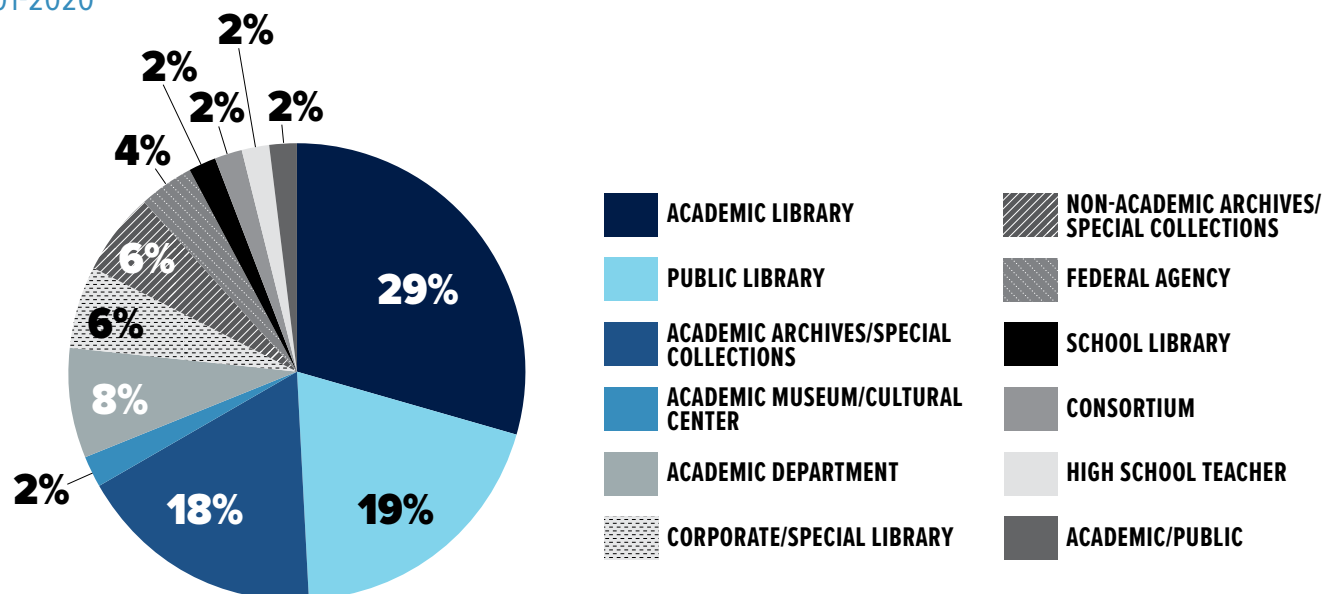
## EMPLOYMENT SECTOR

2020-2024



## EMPLOYMENT SECTOR

2001-2020



“Being a Knowledge River scholar has helped me grow as a librarian and helped me find a career that is fulfilling where I can give back to my community. KR is the reason I am in the leadership position I am in today.”

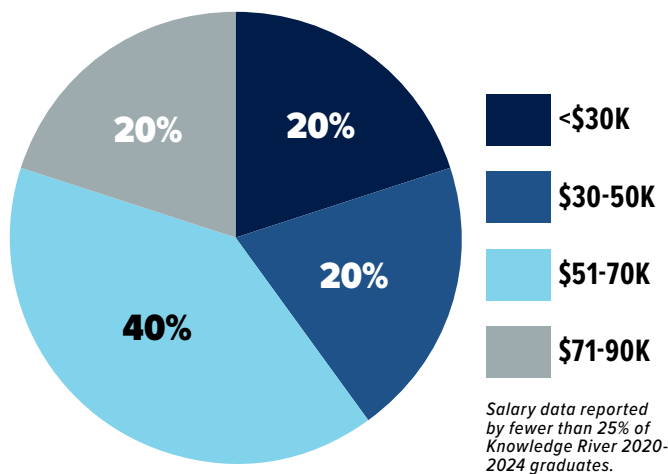
— MARISSA ALCORTA  
Knowledge River Scholar, MLIS '06



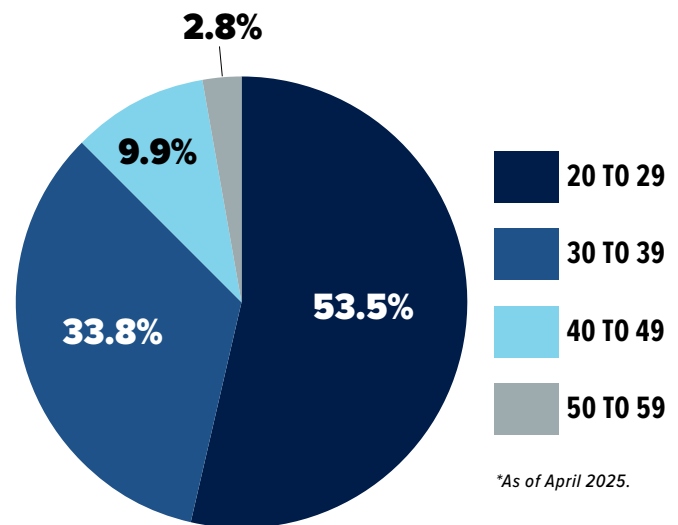
## For Knowledge River alumni, the program's impact doesn't end at graduation.

A strong sense of solidarity continues to connect graduates across cohorts, creating a far-reaching professional network that fosters collaboration, career advancement and mutual support. Many alumni speak to the value of reconnecting with fellow scholars during pivotal moments in their careers—whether seeking guidance, navigating leadership transitions or simply sharing the challenges of the profession. Just as vital is the spirit of mentorship that threads through the KR community. Alumni often return to guide and support current students, offering the same encouragement and insight that once shaped their own journeys. In this way, the program's legacy is not only sustained but continually strengthened.

### SALARY RANGE 2020-2024



### KNOWLEDGE RIVER GRADUATE CURRENT AGE\* 2020-2024



**“Being a Knowledge River scholar gave me the background and network needed to lead within librarianship. Knowledge River has played a big role as an international librarian and library leader. It is a constant reminder of why I started in librarianship, and has helped me create a pathway in library leadership.”**

– JEFF CRUZ  
Knowledge River Scholar, MLIS '10

**“Being a Knowledge River scholar provided me professional opportunities that directly impacted my professional career. Network connections helped me meet people who recruited me to my position. These connections have continued to impact my career for the last 20 years since graduation.”**

– TONI ANAYA  
Knowledge River Scholar, MLIS '01



# OUR IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES AND THE PROFESSION

At its core, the Knowledge River Scholars Program is about transformation—not only of individuals, but of the communities they serve and the profession they shape. From the beginning, Knowledge River has centered the needs of historically underserved populations, particularly Latino, Indigenous and other communities not fully represented in the library and information science professions. KR alumni now carry that mission forward, advancing access and cultural relevance in libraries, archives and information institutions across the country and beyond.

As professionals, KR scholars serve in roles where they champion inclusive services, expand access to information and advocate for the voices often overlooked in dominant narratives. They lead community archives, support public and tribal libraries, build collections accessible to all and challenge

“*Being a Knowledge River scholar means that I advocate for marginalized communities and foster equitable learning through information literacy.*”

— PALOMA BARRAZA,  
Knowledge River Scholar, MLIS '23

systemic barriers within their institutions. Many bring lived experience that allows them to serve not only with skill, but with empathy and authenticity—an approach that resonates deeply in the communities they support.

In the profession at large, KR alumni are shaping conversations around representation, access and institutional change. They bring essential perspectives to library and information leadership, professional organizations and policy discussions, advocating for practices that reflect the full breadth of the communities, libraries and archives they strive to serve. Their presence, shaped by a program that honors cultural identity and fosters genuine belonging, continues to challenge long-standing inequities and redefine what leadership looks like in the information field.

The ripple effects of Knowledge River are visible in every corner of the information world: in the librarian creating a safe space for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) teens from marginalized communities, the archivist preserving local histories too often erased, the academic leader mentoring the next generation of culturally competent professionals. These are not isolated stories—they are the collective impact of a community of scholars committed to justice, representation and the transformative power of information.



**“Working with our Knowledge River recruits has made our library system more sensitive to the needs of underserved populations as well as celebrating cultures. Having individuals who have had the KR experience on our teams throughout the library system means that we do a better job providing services to our very diverse community. They help us to think differently in creating programs and services and help us to listen to voices that are not always at the table. I believe our KR grads help us to elevate the importance of the library beyond the walls, meaning we must be out of the building, meeting people where they are. Outreach, community relationship building and networking have all been increased by our KR grad staff helping to move the needle.”**

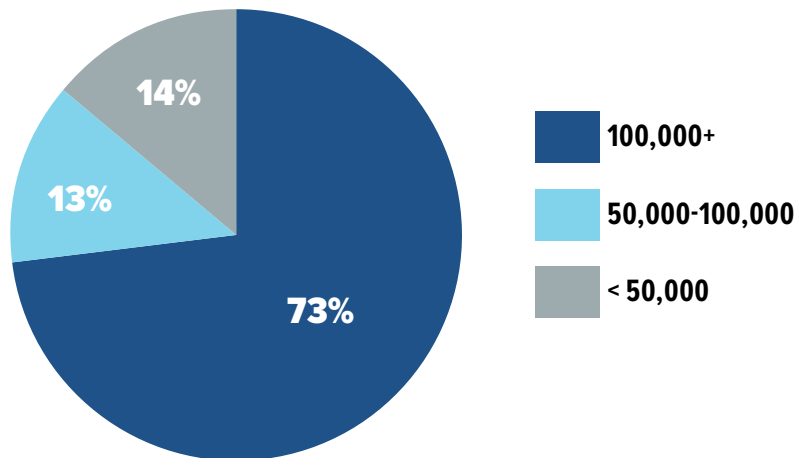
**– AMBER D. MATHEWSON**  
County Librarian and Library Director, Pima County Public Library



# Serving an Array of Communities

Whether in major metropolitan areas or smaller communities, Knowledge River graduates are connecting people to information in meaningful ways—most notably in cities with populations over 100,000, where their skills are shaping more accessible library and information services.

**POPULATION SIZE SERVED  
BY KNOWLEDGE RIVER GRADUATES  
2020-2024**



“During my time at the U of A Poetry Center, our library was enriched by the creativity and innovation of Knowledge River students who served as interns and volunteers. With their talent and dedication, Knowledge River scholars represent the very best of our profession. Graduates of the program are doing some of the most interesting work in library and information science today.”

– WENDY BURK, MLIS '12  
Former Library Director,  
The University of Arizona Poetry Center

“We have been committed to offering graduate assistantships to Knowledge River scholars with the belief that we can contribute to diversifying the special collections field within the library profession. Early in the development of our program here, KR GAs have contributed to projects that, without them, wouldn't be possible to undertake.”

– VERÓNICA REYES-ESCUADERO  
Katheryne B. Willock Head of Special Collections,  
University Libraries, The University of Arizona

## **PARTNERSHIPS: EXTENDING IMPACT THROUGH COLLABORATION**

The Knowledge River Scholars Program thrives on deep, sustained partnerships that create real-world learning environments for students and expand the program's reach into the communities we aim to serve. These collaborations offer hands-on opportunities in archives, public libraries and Indigenous-led initiatives, connecting students with mentors, communities and causes that align with their values and aspirations.

Scholars work with library leaders and staff to enhance services and achieve library goals. Select current and historic partnerships include:

### **Arizona State University Library (2010-2024)**

- Hosted and funded two KR scholar GA positions: Labriola National American Indian Data Center, under director and KR graduate Alex Soto, engaging in Indigenous-led library programming, archives and outreach; and Community-Driven Archives Initiative, under director and KR graduate Nancy Godoy, focusing on participatory archiving and inclusive community storytelling.

### **Pima County Public Library (PCPL) (2011-present)**

- Hosts and funds four KR scholar GA positions through a formal intergovernmental agreement with the University of Arizona.
- Between 2020–2024, PCPL hosted 20 KR students in branches across the county.
- Amber Mathewson, director of PCPL, serves on the Master of Arts in Library and Information Science Advisory Board, further strengthening academic-practitioner ties.

### **The University of Arizona Libraries Special Collections (Early 2000s-present)**

- Hosts one KR scholar position funded through the Udall Foundation.
- Students gain experience in archival processing, curating exhibits and public service.

### **The University of Arizona Poetry Center (2013)**

- Hosted KR interns through an MOU for summer placements.
- Provided students opportunities to work in literary archives and public humanities programming.

### **Stories of Arizona's Tribal Libraries (2010-2011)**

- Oral history project led by KR Manager Sandy Littletree in partnership with U of A Associate Professor Jamie A. Lee.
- Captured the development of tribal libraries through interviews and storytelling.
- Included hands-on oral history training during the 10th Gathering of Arizona Tribal Libraries.

### **WEsearch: Wellness Education Project (2005-2008)**

- Collaborative project with the University of Arizona Health Sciences Library.
- Engaged 12 KR students and 24 high school students in a two-year health information initiative.

“*One of the most impactful outcomes of the Knowledge River-University of Arizona Health Sciences Library relationship has been the number of graduates entering the library profession—particularly folks from underrepresented groups and those, not from these groups, learning the information sciences pedagogy to serve said communities.*”

– ANNABELLE V. NUÑEZ

Interim Director, Health Sciences Library, University Libraries, The University of Arizona





# OUR IMPACT ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATION

Over more than two decades, the Knowledge River Scholars Program has not only shaped generations of librarians and information professionals, it has also served as a model for innovation across library and information science education. Our commitment to mentorship, community and culturally grounded professional preparation has inspired the development of similar initiatives aimed at increasing access and representation within the field.

At the University of Alabama, for instance, Dr. Robert B. Riter, associate and Marie Drolet Bristol-EBSCO Endowed Professor at the School of Library and Information Studies, cites the Knowledge River Scholars Program as a foundational influence in the creation of

“*The Knowledge River Scholars Program provides a model for program durability and responsiveness to the changing needs of information professionals.*”

– DR. ROBERT B. RITER  
Associate and Marie Drolet Bristol-EBSCO  
Endowed Professor, School of Library and  
Information Studies, The University of Alabama



the Archival Studies Social Justice Master's Scholarship Program (SJ4A), a federally funded initiative designed to support BIPOC paraprofessionals working in community-based archives. In planning SJ4A, the KR program served as a key model for how to develop "systematic programs for providing professional graduate education, structured mentorship and community building," he says.

The Knowledge River program's approach to mentorship and peer support, in particular, offered critical guidance as the SJ4A team addressed the need for evidence-based mentorship practices and strong professional networks. Equally influential were KR's efforts around assessment and its commitment to evaluating how well it prepares students for justice-focused information work.

This influence extends back more than a decade. In 2009, Knowledge River lent its support to the development of the Circle of Learning program at San Jose State University's School of Library and Information Science, in partnership with the American Indian Library Association. Knowledge River administrators recognized Circle of Learning as a promising effort to reduce barriers for American Indian and Alaska Native students and committed not only to sharing expertise but also to fostering connections between students in both programs. That early collaboration underscored KR's leadership in shaping more equitable pathways into librarianship.

Whether through direct partnership or as a guiding framework, the Knowledge River Scholars Program has helped catalyze new approaches to library and information science education—approaches that are more accessible, enduring and deeply responsive to the communities the programs and their graduates serve.

## NOTABLE PUBLICATIONS 2020-2024

Since its inception, Knowledge River scholars and alumni have advanced conversations at the intersections of information access, social justice and community empowerment. Their research, writing and creative work explore issues such as Indigenous data sovereignty, equitable information practices, cultural humility and anti-racist scholarship in library and information science. The following notable publications reflect the program's commitment to generating knowledge that centers the experiences, histories and needs of underrepresented communities. View Appendix B for additional KR-related publications since 2020.

**Tribal Critical Race Theory in Zuni Pueblo: Information Access in a Cautious Community** | *Disrupting Library and Information Studies Through Critical Race Theory* | 2021  
M. H. Belard-Lewis and S. R. Kosteletzky

**Equity, Diversity and Inclusion** | *Introduction to Law Librarianship* | 2021  
F. Fasano, H. Plotkin and J. Bedier

**A Review of the Culturally Responsive Guidelines of Alaska Public Libraries** | *Library and Information Sciences in Arctic and Northern Studies* | 2024  
E. Hollingsworth and R. Tyson

**Saad eí data: Formalizing the Indigenous Data Sovereignty Movement Within the Navajo Nation Legal System, a Comparison to the Māori Data Governance Model** | *Arizona Journal of International and Comparative Law* | 2024  
S. L. Kee

**Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Law Libraries: Mid-Atlantic Roundtable Report** | *Arizona Legal Studies Discussion Paper* | 2024  
C. Laskowski, T. M. Miguel-Stearns, T. Ching, Emily Florio, K. Lohmeier, J. O'Grady, A. Postar, A. M. Williams and K. Wolek

**Graphic Novela: Mexican American Families' Use of Community Services for Older Adults** | *Clinical Nursing Research* | 2022  
L. Martin-Plank, M. P. Davis, D. K. Williams, A. Nuñez, J. May, E. M. Ortiz-Dowling, Z. Reyes, B. Heasley and J. D. Crist

**Essential Leadership Skills for Health Sciences Information Professionals** | 2023  
A. Nuñez and J. Crum, Editors

**Researching Native Americans: Reflections on Vocabulary, Search Strategies and Technology** | *Online Searcher* | 2021  
A. Soto, B. A. Sanchez, J. M. Mueller-Alexander and J. Martin

# OUR FUNDING

Since the inception of the Knowledge River Scholars Program in 2001, the University of Arizona has received \$6.46 million in awarded grants and other funding, including \$1.19 million from 2020 to 2024. \$4.62 million of that total funding has gone directly to the students themselves in the form of graduate assistantships, tuition remission, other tuition benefits and scholarships, including \$900,000 from 2020 to 2024.

FUNDING SOURCE	Dates	GA Salary (1190) and ERE	Grad Tuition Remission (2111)	Tuition Benefit (2130)	Faculty/ Other Salary	Conf Reg (5520)	Scholarships (6860)	Travel	Other	Total
IMLS <sup>1</sup>	2001-2003				\$89,842		\$249,046	\$31,564	\$121,755	\$492,207
IMLS <sup>1</sup>	2003-2006		\$669		\$60,517	\$2,955	\$237,925	\$14,088	\$60,797	\$376,951
IMLS <sup>1</sup>	2005-2009	\$126,234	\$31,012		\$125,300	\$7,576	\$415,329	\$37,661	\$243,131	\$986,243
PCPL <sup>2</sup>	2008-2011	\$116,238	\$43,858		\$55,641		\$76,172		\$0	\$291,909
IMLS <sup>1</sup>	2008-2012	\$224,705	\$61,899		\$90,986	\$6,606	\$318,982	\$27,758	\$267,187	\$998,123
IMLS <sup>1</sup>	2011-2014	\$202,329	\$76,978		\$49,238	\$3,273	\$360,706	\$30,264	\$107,040	\$829,828
PCPL <sup>2</sup>	2011-2026	\$722,408		\$415,717			\$77,491		\$11,082	\$1,226,698
IMLS <sup>1</sup>	2014-2015				\$6,004	\$2,356		\$8,655	\$17,714	\$34,729
IMLS <sup>1</sup>	2014-2015	\$31,052	\$6,159				\$131,170		\$454	\$168,835
IMLS <sup>1</sup>	2015-2018				\$12,797	\$5,210		\$17,256	\$32,431	\$67,694
IMLS <sup>1</sup>	2015-2018	\$28,799		\$17,723		\$685	\$147,202	\$4,971	\$7,489	\$206,869
IMLS <sup>1</sup>	2020-2025	\$99,092		\$55,548	\$113,211	\$3,670	\$340,619	\$22,795	\$143,099	\$778,034
		<b>\$1,550,857</b>	<b>\$220,575</b>	<b>\$488,988</b>	<b>\$603,536</b>	<b>\$32,331</b>	<b>\$2,354,642</b>	<b>\$195,012</b>	<b>\$1,012,179</b>	<b>\$6,458,120</b>
		<b>24.0%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>36.5%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>15.7%</b>	

## Notes

1. Institute of Museum and Library Services. 2. Pima County Public Library.

## KNOWLEDGE RIVER DONATIONS

KNOWLEDGE RIVER REUNION FUND		KNOWLEDGE RIVER SCHOLARSHIP FUND	
2012	\$766.45	2012	\$110.00
2016	\$2,500.00	2017	\$5,250.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,266.45</b>	2018	\$7,895.00
		2019	\$9,920.00
		2020	\$2,410.00
		2021	\$1,400.00
		2022	\$1,220.00
		2023	\$3,400.00
		2024	\$300.00
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$31,905.00</b>

Thanks to the generosity of donors to the Knowledge River Scholarship Fund and other initiatives, more than \$35,000 has been raised to support KR scholars since 2012.

## STUDENT GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

In addition to direct grants, donations and other funding, Knowledge River scholars have been supported through GA positions, internships and the like by:

- Arizona State Library
- Arizona State University Library
- College of Information Science
- Pima County Public Library
- University of Arizona Libraries

# THE FUTURE WE CREATE TOGETHER

## OUR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: A PIVOTAL MOMENT FOR KNOWLEDGE RIVER

Knowledge River Scholars Program has long served as a national model for educating and empowering library and information science professionals committed to the needs of underserved communities. Historically bolstered by federal grants—most notably from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)—as well as key regional partners like the Arizona State Library, Pima County Public Library and University of Arizona Libraries—the program has cultivated a vibrant cohort of scholars who now serve across libraries, archives and information institutions nationwide and beyond. However, the current federal landscape, marked by deep cuts to agencies like the IMLS, poses a critical funding challenge that threatens the sustainability of this pioneering initiative.

Yet within this challenge lies a powerful opportunity. As federal support recedes, the call grows louder for alumni, private donors, foundations and community-focused institutions to safeguard and strengthen the future of Knowledge River. Our stakeholders have the chance not only to preserve a program with proven impact, but to assert the enduring importance of equitable representation in the information professions. Continued investment from non-federal sources will ensure that Knowledge River remains a wellspring for local voices, culturally responsive scholarship and community-centered librarianship—values that are not only vital, but urgent, in today’s rapidly evolving information landscape.

### A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

As this impact report demonstrates, the Knowledge River Scholars Program is transformative. As we look ahead, the Knowledge River Scholars Program is focused on strategic growth and sustainability. Central to this vision is the idea of building upon the program’s established foundation while expanding its reach, strengthening partnerships and diversifying support networks.

### RECRUITMENT AND REPRESENTATION

One of the key goals for the Knowledge River Scholar Program’s future is to increase recruitment from Native American communities and other historically underserved groups. By focusing on students, particularly from underrepresented areas, we aim to ensure the program remains as inclusive and culturally relevant as possible. Strengthening relationships with Native American communities, tribal colleges and other regional organizations will help increase awareness and enrollment. Targeted outreach, mentorship and support will play a critical role in attracting students who are passionate about advocating for their communities and becoming leaders in the field.

### EXPANSION ACROSS THE COLLEGE

Knowledge River seeks to expand its impact across College of Information Science programs, potentially to other graduate programs: Master of Science in Data Science, Master of Science in Information Science and PhD in Information. By integrating Knowledge River resources and specialization in cultural curriculum throughout the college, we can offer specialized tracks in cultural heritage, archival studies and community-centered librarianship. This will help ensure that students have a well-rounded, culturally responsive education while also fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration that strengthens the program’s foundation and extends its reach.

Additionally, as the cultural heritage informatics discipline grows in the college, KR can serve as a foundational cornerstone for ensuring that cultural awareness and culturally relevant curriculum are integrated into this exciting new area.



## STRENGTHENING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

A vital part of the KR program's long-term success lies in building and strengthening relationships with other academic departments, such as Mexican American Studies, American Indian Studies, Africana Studies and the College of Education, among others. By fostering joint research initiatives, sharing grant applications and hosting collaborative workshops, Knowledge River will deepen its engagement with these organizations, which will enrich both the academic experience and the professional opportunities available to students.

Additionally, expanding connections with regional institutions of higher education such as Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, Pima Community College and tribal colleges will help create a broader network of scholars, archivists and librarians. These relationships will provide scholars with access to a wealth of resources, career opportunities and professional networks.

## EXPANDING FUNDING SOURCES

To ensure the sustainability of Knowledge River, diversifying funding sources is critical. While federal grants have historically supported the program, the future relies on securing private donations, foundation support and community-based funding. Engaging alumni and cultivating relationships with local and regional philanthropic organizations will provide the financial stability needed to continue the program's work. Alumni, who have firsthand experience with the program and its impact, will be invaluable partners in ensuring the program's continued success.

## BUILDING THE PHOENIX COHORT

An exciting opportunity for Knowledge River is the creation of a Phoenix-based cohort. The goal is to foster a strong, localized community of scholars and practitioners in the Phoenix metropolitan area, providing a unique space for networking, mentorship and professional development. Building new partnerships and strengthening existing partnerships with organizations will be key in this effort. This cohort will further strengthen ties between Knowledge River scholars and alumni, creating a vibrant local community that can collaborate on projects and initiatives that directly benefit libraries and archives throughout Arizona.

## ADVOCACY AND REPRESENTATION

The Knowledge River program will continue to emphasize the importance of advocacy and representation in the information professions. Alumni will be encouraged to take on leadership roles in professional organizations and policy-making bodies, ensuring that the values of accessibility, cultural relevance and community support continue to shape the future of the field. As leaders in their communities, Knowledge River alumni play an essential role in transforming the profession and challenging systemic barriers that have historically excluded marginalized voices.

The Knowledge River Scholars Program is poised for continued growth and impact. By building on our foundational principles and by fostering strong partnerships and diversifying funding, Knowledge River will ensure that future generations of scholars are equipped to shape an accessible and equitable information landscape for all communities.



## SUPPORT THE NEXT GENERATION OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION LEADERS

The Knowledge River Scholarship Fund ensures that students committed to serving historically underserved communities can access graduate education and the professional opportunities that follow.

Your donation directly supports tuition assistance, graduate assistantships and professional development for future librarians, archivists and information professionals.

## INVEST IN THEIR JOURNEY:



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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A.

### KNOWLEDGE RIVER ADVISORY BOARD

**Jose Aponte**

Director (Retired)  
San Diego County Library  
San Diego, California

**Elaine Cubbins**

College Librarian  
Tohono O'odham Community College  
Sells, Arizona

**Jolie Graybill**

Dean  
North Dakota State University Libraries  
Fargo, North Dakota

**Luis Herrera**

City Librarian (Retired)  
San Francisco, California

**Elizabeth Martinez**

Policy Advisor  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

**Amber Mathewson**

Director  
Pima County Public Library  
Tucson, Arizona

**Teresa Miguel-Stearns**

Professor of Law and  
Associate Dean and Director,  
Daniel F. Cracchiolo Law Library  
The University of Arizona  
Tucson, Arizona

**Annabelle Nuñez**

Interim Director  
Health Sciences Library  
The University of Arizona

**Mark Puente**

Associate Professor and Associate  
Dean for Organizational Development  
Purdue University Libraries and School  
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West Lafayette, Indiana

**Alyce Sadongei**

Executive Director  
Mission Gardens  
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**Rebecca Swift**

Director of Student  
Services and Librarian  
San Carlos Apache College  
San Carlos, Arizona

**Melanie Toledo-Matteson**

Tribal Librarian  
Ira H. Hayes Memorial Library  
Gila River Community, Arizona

**Mary Villegas**

Library Consultant  
Arizona State Library  
Phoenix, Arizona

## Appendix B.

### PUBLICATIONS

Publications and research contributions by alumni and program faculty about or from the Knowledge River Scholars Program from 2020 to 2024 include:

- Becker, J., Anaya, T. & Hovious, A. (2024, October 16). The (Mis)Information world of moms for liberty: A digital ethnographic case study [Conference presentation]. *Proceedings of the ALISE Annual Conference*, October 16, 2024.
- Belarde-Lewis, M. H., & Kosteletzky, S.R. (2021). Tribal critical race theory in Zuni Pueblo: Information access in a cautious community. In Leung, S. Y., & López-McKnight, J. R., (Eds.) *Knowledge Justice: Disrupting Library and Information Studies through Critical Race Theory*. MIT Press.
- Cabrera, P., & Carroll, E.A. (2022). Environmental equity for students in the library and LEED buildings. In A. Brissett, & D. Moronta (Eds.), *Practicing Social Justice in Libraries*, 1st ed., (pp 86–99). Routledge.
- Dawson, J., Dougherty, M., Alexander, P., & Puente, M. (2021, October 27). Answering the call: Steps we can take to make research and scholarly communications more equitable and open [Conference presentation]. UMD Libraries' 2021 Open Access Week, College Park, MD, United States.
- Fasano, F., Plotkin, H., & Bedier, J. (2021). Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion. In Z. Joyner, & C. Laskowski (Eds.), *Introduction to Law Librarianship*. University of Arizona.
- Hollingsworth, E., & Tyson R. (2024). A review of the culturally responsive guidelines of Alaska Public Libraries. In Acadia, S. (Eds.) *Library and information sciences in arctic and northern studies*. Springer Polar Sciences.
- Kee, S.L. (2024). Saad eí data: Formalizing the indigenous data sovereignty movement within the Navajo Nation legal system, a comparison to the Māori data governance model. *Arizona Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 41, (1).
- Laskowski, C., Miguel-Stearns, T. M., Ching, T., Emily Florio, Lohmeier, K., O'Grady, J., Postar, A., Williams, A.M., & Wolek, K. (2024, July 31). *Artificial intelligence & the future of law libraries: Mid-Atlantic roundtable report*. Arizona Legal Studies Discussion Paper No. 24-25.
- Maez, P. R. (2021). *Voices from the margins: A narrative exploratory study of fat Latinx women and their information processes/interpretations of health messaging*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Arizona]. UA Campus Repository.
- Martin-Plank L, Davis MP, Williams D.K., Nuñez, A., May, J., Ortiz-Dowling, E.M., Reyes, Z., Heasley, B., Crist, J.D. (2022). Graphic novela: Mexican American families' use of community services for older adults. *Clinical Nursing Research*, 31(4).
- Nuñez, A., & Crum, J. (Eds.). (2023). Essential leadership skills for health sciences information professionals. Medical Library Association Books. Rowman & Littlefield.
- O'Neal, J.R. (2024). Indigenizing research and archives: Relationality and the collections back movement. *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 113(1).
- Soto, A., Sanchez, B.A, Mueller-Alexander, J.M., & Martin, J. (2021). Researching Native Americans: Reflections on vocabulary, search strategies, and technology. *Online Searcher*, 45(5).
- Yazzie, D. "chili." (2022). Transforming Diné Education: Innovations in Pedagogy and Practice. In P. Vallejo, & Werito, V. (Eds.), *Transforming Diné education: Innovations in pedagogy and practice*. University of Arizona Press.





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**KNOWLEDGE RIVER ALUMNI,  
STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE COLLEGE OF INFORMATION SCIENCE**

[infosci.arizona.edu/knowledge-river/alumni-update](https://infosci.arizona.edu/knowledge-river/alumni-update)

The information contained in this report is based on two national surveys of Knowledge River graduates conducted in 2020 and 2025; student, alumni, program and budget data collected by the University of Arizona; historical records; publication analysis; and recent outreach to alumni, partners and other stakeholders.



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