

# An Introduction to Resilience: Library Students and Rocky VI

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## Abstract

In this short introductory piece, I outline some of the struggles faced by MLIS students to highlight their resilience in the face of these issues.

*Keywords:* Resilience, Student Life

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I would like to open this inaugural edition of Pathfinder's partnership with the Forum for Information Professionals with a quote from the excellent, if overly dramatic, boxing film Rocky VI. For any readers who may not have seen this masterpiece, in one scene Rocky is speaking with his son Robert, who blames his father for his failings. In what I boldly claim to be one of the greatest motivational speeches, Rocky tells his son: "You, me, or nobody is gonna' hit as hard as life. But it ain't about how hard you hit, it's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward" (2006).

Why, I hear you ask, would I begin with an overdramatic quote from a boxing movie? The theme we chose for FIP2020 was Resilience and Libraries, and I would argue that this speaks to some of the difficulties MLIS students face. The work of graduate students, while no doubt rewarding, is hard. Students are expected to juggle classwork, professional development opportunities, committee and volunteer work, job(s), and ideally some semblance of a personal life. Through this, the ever-present spectre of imposter syndrome questions whether that student belongs. And as that student prepares to graduate, they enter a field that is struggling to define its place in

the public sphere amidst shrinking public funds, often faced with precarious labour and temporary contract positions. In a phrase: nobody hits as hard as life.

Lest this opening piece stray too far into negativity, I think it prudent to return to the theme of resilience. The goal of this introduction is not to solicit pity or to place blame, but to recognise the incredible work of my fellow students in spite of the aforementioned problems they face. The extended abstracts collected here act as evidence that students are willing to actively and critically engage with these issues; that they are taking the hits thrown by life yet continue to push forward. Presentations this year tackled complex issues including information needs of refugees, global warming and misinformation, and reconciling the library and Indigenous peoples in Canada. These are among the most critical issues we face in our field, and that students remain willing to engage with these in addition to everything else should be a testament to their passion and their dedication to their work. Making the time in their busy schedules to present their research is a demonstration of fierce resilience.

To summarize, a lot is asked of MLIS students and unfortunately much of their work has a tendency to remain unseen and unappreciated. I hope that the partnership between Pathfinder and the Forum for Information Professionals will continue to offer the opportunity for students to be recognized for the substantial effort they put into their degrees. As you read through the extended abstracts collected here, I ask that you consider the passion, dedication, and resilience shown by my fellow students in presenting their research to you. While I will admit this may be a different form of resilience than that shown by a fictional boxer in a particularly cheesy movie, it remains an impressive show of resilience, nonetheless.

### **References**

Winkler, C. (Producer) & Stallone, S. (Director). (2006). *Rocky Balboa* [Motion picture]. United States: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.