

LAS Passion Award – Bella Ratmelia

Bella is a Data Services (DS) Librarian at the SMU Libraries. As the DS Librarian, Bella continues to innovate and push the boundaries of librarianship, especially in supporting the research community. She adeptly utilizes her technical expertise to facilitate “coding for research” workshops in Python and R for SMU undergraduates, postgraduates, and researchers. These workshops have garnered praise from participants for their effectiveness and relevance to their academic pursuits.

She also spearheaded SMU Libraries' inaugural 24-hour Hackathon, 'Generate Your L(AI)brary Hackathon 2023.' In addition to her role as project manager of the Hackathon, Bella served as a mentor and conducted pre-hackathon sessions and technical workshops to equip participants with essential skills, and this has helped to shape users' perception of librarians for the better.

Bella embarked on her journey in librarianship at NTU Libraries in 2013, where she began as a paraprofessional and key member for NTU's novel initiative Blogs@NTU, a campus wide blog service on WordPress which houses some 300 blog projects in 4 key areas – Academic & Research, Administrative, Course & Teaching, and Library. Bella's passion and dedication to the library profession were immediately evident, and her unwavering commitment to continuous learning and skill refinement culminated in her well-deserved recognition with the LAS Scholarship Award in 2017. Bella transitioned to the professional librarian role in 2019 after obtaining the MSc in Information Studies from NTU in 2018.

Bella served admirably as an LAS council member for four years from 2019 to 2023 as Chair of the IT Committee. During her tenure, she played a pivotal role in the digital transformation of LAS infrastructure, overseeing initiatives such as modernization of LAS website, optimization of LAS' email and document archive, and the successful implementation of an online portal for membership and events management and payments. These initiatives not only enhanced efficiency but also significantly streamlined administrative processes for both members and the association as a whole.

Furthermore, Bella is active in the Singapore library scene, which includes being a part of the organizing team for the LAS Conference 2019 and the LAS-PPM Conference 2021, and most recently, presented at the LAS-NLB Professional Sharing event in November 2023.

Bella's passion for her profession has inspired her peers to strive for excellence. She has generously shared her expertise, leading a two-day data carpentry skill workshop in 2022 for SMU Library staff and a similar initiative for LAS members in March 2024. Her commitment to enhance librarians' data skills has led her to be invited to conferences such as CALIBER 2022 and AccessLab 2024 as a keynote speaker.

Bella's journey in librarianship is a testament to her passion, dedication, and commitment to excellence. Her continuous effort to push the boundaries of librarianship will undoubtedly continue to help shape the professional development for librarians in Singapore and beyond. Her contributions to the field made her an exemplary role model for aspiring librarians and is deserving of the LAS Passion Award 2023.