

Developing the
Next
Generation
of Library
Leaders

by Lori Birrell

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Foreword

Developing the Next Generation of Library Leaders is an important addition to the library literature and the broader literature on leadership. The work details the experiences and insights of library leaders across a spectrum of domains and functions. The ten big ideas are put forth as the basis for a call to action for library professionals considering leadership opportunities, and for those in hierarchical positions to foster leadership development in the organizations in which they lead.

As a senior administrator, my path to hierarchical leadership was, if anything, conventional. Opportunities to assume hierarchical leadership positions occurred, and I applied. This was often at the encouragement of senior leaders or peers, which speaks in some measure to the doubts that I had—a theme discussed in this book. Beyond this, I look back and see so many leadership opportunities that I created myself by extending beyond my comfort zone to volunteer for professional or civic leadership roles or to suggest I could assist or be involved organizationally in areas outside my departmental home.

Senior leaders also offered me opportunities to participate in formal leadership programs. I pursued a doctorate in educational leadership and change to stoke my interest and curiosity about leadership and organizational culture, also providing me with the theoretical underpinnings in a range of important areas for the position I hold: motivation, group dynamics, organizational culture, transactional and transformational change, leadership style, etc. I use this theoretical knowledge every single day. These theoretical and practical experiences, and the generosity of senior library leaders who shared their wisdom and experience, honed and inspired my leadership development, confidence, and humility. Reflective leadership reminds us that a senior leadership role is a humbling experience that one is privileged to hold. This title reminds us all that we are accountable to the next generation of library leaders.

When I became a department head for the first time, I vividly recall seeing the talent across the department comprised of librarians and library assistants, yet witnessing that library assistants were not typically invited to develop and use their talents beyond the core function of the unit. To me it seemed simple: Wouldn't it make sense to invite the hearts and minds of all departmental members to achieve departmental aspirations? Wouldn't this be mutually beneficial to the individual and to the organization? Would this not be a means to provide a pathway for future leaders?

This experience spawned my interest in leadership. I have been a student of leadership ever since. Placing the individual at the center of the organization is fundamental to my philosophy. Individuals comprise organizations. Individual learning and development make organizations smarter, which is at the heart of the concept of a learning organization. I ask, what values, structures, incentives, and systems might one use to encourage a healthy organizational culture and, in so doing, develop future leaders? How does one ignite the hearts and minds of all organizational members to contribute to the achievement of organizational aspirations? How can one demystify leadership? This is a complex process of engagement that, inasmuch as possible, can result in a pipeline of motivated and talented individuals

to fill hierarchical leadership positions in library organizations. It is a meta-approach to succession planning, one that is inclusive and fair.

Succession planning is a professional responsibility, one that will not necessarily ensure that an individual in which an organization has invested will remain in the organization. One must look at the ecosystem of libraries and archives—and related organizations for that matter—to understand that there is a constant flow of people coming and going as many assume more senior positions as each advances their career and interests. As senior leaders, we should do our part to prepare as many of our organizational members as possible to assume leadership roles, irrespective of the organization they land.

What are structural supports that can be deployed to foster leadership development and, in turn, pathways to leadership in one's organization? Everyone can be a leader. The key to a healthy organizational climate is to invite meaningful engagement with all organizational members. Sparking leadership aspirations in librarians and library assistants can result in setting a path toward hierarchical leadership. Including leadership and mentoring opportunities for students to expose them to the library and archives professions can sow the seeds for a future library leader, including the urgent need to address greater diversity in library leadership.

Open calls to invite all organizational members to participate in working groups or implementation committees is a structural tactic that can increase the inclusivity of participation. Leading or participating in a short-term, outcomes-driven working group provides an outstanding opportunity for an individual to hone one's ability to work in a team, influence peers, and develop leadership and management skills. These are essential leadership competencies, especially when one does not have positional authority.

Other pathways to leadership involve creating leadership opportunities during organizational planning, such as strategic or master planning, space or program development, search committee participation, or filling interim positions. I recently experimented with assigning a co-leadership opportunity to two individuals to lead a department while a search for a permanent leader ensued. Pairing individuals who brought different leadership competencies and a shared passion for the department provided them with a supportive structure and the opportunity to explore hierarchical leadership with additional compensation.

Providing interested organizational members with leadership learning opportunities exposes them to the theory and best practices of leadership, something I have been privileged to experience throughout my career. Demystifying leadership is another means to foster engagement and curiosity with those thinking about leadership. In my role, I schedule opportunities for casual conversations with organizational members and I regularly share my activities, including organizational direction, challenges, and obstacles, in a weekly email sent to all staff. Job shadowing is eye-opening for both the participant and the leader, and I have had the privilege of being shadowed over multiple days by an Association of Research Libraries (ARL) leadership fellow. Early in my career, I remember how hungry I was to understand the nature of senior leadership positions. This has propelled me to seek engagement with new information professionals either through formal mentoring relationships or informal mechanisms. The mutual benefit of these exchanges cannot be overestimated, and I believe that it is the professional responsibility of senior leaders to “pay it forward.”

Mitigating the identity crisis that can occur when one leaves one's functional position to assume a hierarchical leadership role is one of the big ideas that emerged in the research

for this book. Early in my career, my functional expertise was in reference and instructional services. Admittedly, my search techniques are not what they used to be; however, on a daily basis, I use the service philosophy and my understanding of user needs and the organization of information that my former functional expertise provided. Since, I have developed other areas of expertise, such as library as place and leadership, which provide me with an enormous amount of intellectual and professional satisfaction. I posit that entering a hierarchical leadership role can be deeply satisfying and does provide opportunities to hone, develop, and expand one's functional expertise.

Throughout my career, I have developed and sustained relationships across the profession. A formative experience occurred when I was an ARL leadership fellow, being part of a twenty-two-member cohort of academic librarians and archivists from Canada and the United States over an eighteen-month period. From this, a constellation of networks evolved and continues to evolve. At the time, I had spent my entire life and career in Canada. This program opened up the possibility of working in another country, specifically the United States, where I moved in 2012 to assume the position I hold today. The network of colleagues I met through the Leadership Fellows program and the site visits and training that I received provided me with the foundation and confidence to assume a senior leadership role in another country.

Developing the Next Generation of Library Leaders provides myriad insights into the motivations, challenges, and pathways to leadership for those contemplating a move into hierarchical leadership. Whether one is an early, mid, or seasoned library professional, or someone who holds a hierarchical leadership position, it is incumbent upon all of us to foster the learning environment and healthy organizational culture that nurtures leadership learning and development. In so doing, this will provide the context for the next generation of library leaders to develop and flourish for individual and organizational success and long-term sustainability of libraries and archives.

—Mary Ann Mavrinac, MLS, EdD.

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When deciding what names to give the composite characters in this book, I tried to come up with names easy to read and pronounce. Before I knew it, I was writing my mom's name, Debbie. So now throughout the book, I feel like she's right there with me, as she was for so many years, as my champion.

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Introduction

Each librarian has *their story*—their story of how and why they decided to become a librarian. Some describe their work as a calling or vocation. Others are accidental librarians. I consider myself in the latter group, as I pursued librarianship after beginning a graduate program in history and took my first archives class. Similarly, each library leader has a story of how and why they entered into a leadership or management role. Individual talents, ambitions, and desires are all variables of their motivation. Certainly, specific forces that drive one person may not motivate another. For me, the light bulb lit during a site visit to another library when I was eighteen months into my career as a manuscripts librarian. I found myself sitting at the “grown-ups” table with senior leaders from my library and those of the host institution. Over the course of those two days, I saw what leadership could look like and the kind of impact these leaders were trying to have on their organization and their university. Following that site visit, I began researching the credentials and experiences senior library leaders brought to their positions. As a result of what I found, I decided to enter an EdD degree program in higher education administration with a concentration in educational leadership. While pursuing that degree, I sought increased leadership and management responsibilities to apply the theory I learned in my program. I engaged in development opportunities my library administration provided, which included national programs—the Leadership and Management Skills Institutes I and II—as well as two coaching workshops led by the university’s central Human Resources department. So while I might have been an accidental librarian, I consider myself a purposeful leader in that I have intentionally sought opportunities to enhance my skill set and advance into more senior positions.

The changing higher education landscape requires strong leaders who provide vision and direction for their organizations in support of the research and learning mission of their universities. It is more important than ever that a university’s librarians possess both breadth and depth of hard and soft skills in addition to their areas of domain expertise to proactively meet the needs of their users. In their work, Susan Komives, Nancy Lucas, and Timothy McMahon argue that “leadership is a concern for all,” and they advocate for shared leadership and leadership development across all levels of the organization, regardless of position description.¹ The authors underscore: “Leadership qualities and skills can be learned and developed.”²

Leadership and management skills and competencies represent one talent gap plaguing academic libraries. The core competencies expected of librarians remain limited to domain-based expertise developed in graduate school and honed over their careers. There is a growing expectation that librarians in administrative positions, both within the organization

and the greater university leadership structure, become systems thinkers in their roles, as Peter Senge termed, “designers, teachers, and stewards.”³ Library administrators must now consider the overarching structures in which they operate, collaborative opportunities to strengthen their organizations, and the creativity necessary to lead bold change in order to keep their organizations relevant. Library administrators also need to be entrepreneurial in their approach to meeting the demands of the university community, have skills and experience with management, be leaders of change, as well as have an understanding of organizational culture.

In their summary published in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, library science scholars Peter Hernon and Nancy Rossiter describe several challenges facing current and potential library leaders. Such challenges include “decline in financial support from government . . . modest growth in endowments” while at the same time “enrollments are increasing and so are tuitions to cover expenses . . . [with] greater public scrutiny of tenure.”⁴ It is within this broader context that I conducted my research and wrote this book. As librarians, we are part of the higher education landscape and cannot ignore the issues Hernon and Rossiter raise.

Curious about the career paths of those librarians in senior leadership positions in academic libraries, I set out to learn more and hear their stories. I initially explored these ideas in my doctoral dissertation, and through this project I have expanded my research to better understand how the library profession must create a leadership pipeline to foster the skill development of the next generation of library leaders. What follows are the results of my research from twenty-two different stories told by assistant deans (ADs).⁵

Regardless of one’s path into library leadership, the stories are full of threads related to personal ambitions, position descriptions, and work/life balance. In this book, you will read those stories as told by four library administrators: Kate, Debbie, Sarah, and Tom. Each of these composite characters represents certain experiences common to the participants in the study and generalizable to the broader library profession.⁶

Kate

Kate is in her late thirties working as an assistant dean. She has been in her role for a little over one year. Kate is a Latina woman. She works at a four-year liberal arts college in the South. Kate began her career as a reference and instruction librarian about ten years ago. Since then, Kate has moved twice to work in different libraries. After expressing an interest in leadership and being encouraged to seek advanced positions in libraries, Kate began to explore the benefits and downsides to administrative roles. She has a young family, with two children under the age of five.

Debbie

Debbie is a sixty-year-old associate dean, who has been in her role for over ten years. Debbie identifies herself as a Caucasian woman. She works at an ARL library at an R1 university in the Pacific Northwest. Debbie’s career began in acquisitions and technical services over thirty years ago. Although Debbie has been an administrator for a number of years, she continues to see herself as a librarian first. Debbie has worked in two institutions over the

course of her career and is nearing retirement. Her youngest child is in college and the other three are grown and have moved away.

Sarah

Sarah is in her early forties and has worked as an assistant dean for nearly two years. Sarah identifies herself as a Caucasian woman. She works at a four-year university in the mid-west. Sarah began her career in web services about fifteen years ago. Sarah is interested in pursuing advanced positions in libraries and has actively sought leadership and management roles. Sarah has worked in three different libraries across the country and settled in the mid-west about five years ago and she hopes to remain in that region. She has three children, ages thirteen, ten, and eight, with family nearby.

Tom

Tom is in his late fifties and has worked as an associate dean for four years. Tom identifies himself as a Caucasian man. He works at an ARL library at a public R1 university in the Northeast and is a tenured faculty member. Tom began his career working in technical services divisions of special collections and archives departments over twenty years ago. Tom has worked in two different libraries over the course of his career. Passionate about manuscripts and rare books, Tom has chosen to advance into senior positions to provide better financial support for his family. His children have recently finished college, and Tom is considering retirement in the coming years.

Chapter Outline

The book is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter presents a review of the relevant literature. Given the outward-facing nature of many of these AD positions, I drew from library leadership literature, higher education and management literature more broadly. All three areas inform our work, and examining the theories and recommendations common to these fields is important as we grapple with the challenge of leadership in academic libraries. Leadership challenges include a dearth of interested and, in some cases, qualified individuals to assume formal leadership roles. This chapter also includes a document analysis of job descriptions posted during the time period when I conducted my research. These postings for AD positions offer a useful jumping-off point to better understand what library deans and hiring managers describe as the responsibilities of these roles, desired skills, and qualifications needed to be successful candidates.

In the second chapter, I present my methods and the limitations of this research. Chapters three through seven explore and analyze the data I collected, told through the voices of Kate, Debbie, Sarah, and Tom. Each chapter begins with a quotation, which serves as a framing for the analysis that follows. Chapter three is a discussion of the participants' first experiences with leadership and supervision. Chapter four explores the participants' skill development and preparation as they entered into leadership and management roles, as well as those skills they needed as they advanced into more senior positions. Chapter five includes reflections about their career trajectories. Chapter six transitions away from the

participants' personal experiences and their own career paths and focuses on their methods of preparing the next generation to assume advanced positions. The last chapter returns the focus to the participants' experiences and analyzes their career goals and what they see as the next steps in their own development. Sprinkled throughout the book are sidebars with reflections from library deans and directors, who I also interviewed. Together with the data I collected from the ADs, these reflections contextualize the necessary skills and experiences needed to be successful in leadership and management roles.

From the data I collected, ten big ideas emerged. These ideas include questions as well as recommendations and, when taken together, offer a holistic approach to shrinking the leadership gap in our profession and preparing the next generation of library leaders to move our profession forward and meet the challenges of higher education.

Big Idea #1: Developing a career ladder

When developing a career ladder, how can the profession and individual academic libraries balance opportunities to scaffold leadership and management skills while also providing meaningful rewards for those who take on additional or informal responsibilities? A career ladder should identify underdeveloped or missing leadership and management skills, provide training to address those gaps, and, where possible, provide opportunities for emerging leaders to apply new skills at their library or through a service role in a professional association. Not a linear approach to leadership and management development, the career ladder includes space to move side to side as well as up and down, as a librarian's interests and aspirations shift over the course of her career.

Big Idea #2: Mitigating identity crisis

To become a leader, librarians must first develop their domain skills as information professionals. However, it becomes their leadership and management skills that enable them to advance. No longer being recognized for one's domain expertise represents an identity crisis for most library leaders and causes them to question how they see themselves contributing to the profession. A number of participants emphasized how removed they felt from the day-to-day work of librarians as they moved further into administrative roles. Finding ways to mitigate this kind of identity crisis will motivate more professionals to consider advancing into managerial roles. A number of participants shared the importance of hanging on to one or two functional tasks from their previous positions, including teaching, researching and writing, or collection acquisitions. Library administrators should recognize the importance of this need and find space within each manager's portfolio to engage in these activities at some level.

Big Idea #3: Learning theory, applying to practice

Librarians develop leadership and management skills when they combine theoretical frameworks learned in an advanced degree program, through programs offered by a professional association, or by participating in a formal training *with* the opportunity to then apply those theories in practice. Though challenging to sustain such theories when confronted

with the day-to-day realities of working in an academic library, each of us should strive to carve out ways to practice and apply our developing skills and to actively provide others with similar opportunities.

Big Idea #4: Support

How do you support those who do and who do not want to advance into senior leadership roles? Support here refers to financial compensation and the motivation to remain engaged. Our profession certainly needs both practitioners and formal managers. Encouraging practitioners to support change agents and library leaders will be a critical component of our work to remain relevant in higher education. Rewarding both groups through flexible schedules, temporary assignments, and increased compensation are a few approaches to ensure sustained engagement and support. Regardless of one's career trajectory, each of us benefits and helps to build the capacity of the organization when we take a non-hierarchical approach to leadership skill development.

Big Idea #5: Find your people

As librarians enter professional positions, they can no longer rely solely on the cohort they developed while in graduate school. They need to actively seek new connections to support their career development. Building a network provides coaching and mentoring opportunities, can lead to leadership roles within professional associations, and most importantly, keeps a librarian's perspective broader than the organizational norms at her own institution. The composition of these networks likely changes over the course of one's career, as personal goals and aspirations evolve and as one moves to new organizations or assumes new positions. Seeking out colleagues with particular skill sets, experiences, and personal qualities furthers our own growth and development as library leaders.

Big Idea #6: Leadership pause points

Given the fast-paced environment of higher education, it is difficult to take the time to consider where to go next in one's career. However, to close the leadership gap in academic libraries, the profession must create pause points for leadership and management skill development throughout one's career. One approach for creating time for reflection is to use the years of experience required or preferred in job descriptions for managers, which on average is between five to ten years, as a benchmark for assessing next steps in a career. For those who have faculty status, another approach is having such conversations when a librarian earns tenure at the six-year mark. Both of those milestones—years of experience and tenure—could be used to provide the space to discuss a librarian's interest in advancing. Pause points may differ for each person. Library leaders should work with their staff to integrate these times of reflection as part of one's development, and not as conversations reserved only for the librarian's annual performance review.

Big Idea #7: Alternative leadership and management models

Library leaders must create alternative leadership and management models in academic libraries that provide emerging leaders/managers with support to experiment with new roles and responsibilities. Such a model could include co-managing a unit or department. One participant spoke of her experience in a co-management structure as her first managerial role. She explained: “It’s helped me think about being collaborative and encouraging other people to be collaborative and to let go of any impulse towards territoriality. Really helping people think creatively about structures.”⁷ Sharing management responsibilities would also enable librarians to remain involved in more functional library work, which would likely be an attractive role for some. Other models include leading a team or initiative, with non-positional authority.

Big Idea #8: Demystifying leadership and management

Presenting a realistic picture of leadership and management roles requires demystifying what leadership and management look like versus what they actually entail. Library leaders need to create formal and informal opportunities in the library to have candid conversations about what a day in the life of a dean, senior administrator, or department head looks like. A second approach is to develop a job shadow or internship program, which includes a project working with a senior leader, to clarify the demands and realities of being an administrator. A third method is to infuse conversations with details of leadership and management work to provide an important window into the details of what duties come with those roles.

Big Idea #9: Succession planning

In light of the demographic data indicating that library deans enter and remain in those roles later in life and longer than in previous generations, members of Generation X may feel a lack of motivation or urgency to assume senior leadership positions, which will have a long-term impact on the profession as baby boomers continue to retire. Further research will be needed to analyze this potential impact. Succession planning at all levels will be critical to ensure continuity of service and innovative practices in academic libraries.

Big Idea #10: Battling gender-based doubts

Gender-based doubts are alive and well in our profession and impact those who choose—or who do *not* choose—to pursue leadership positions. Drawing on leadership development practices in other fields may help to address this systemic issue. The teaching and nursing fields may be two professions to examine, as both—like libraries—are female dominated. Developing formal and informal programs with both women and men to address feelings of inadequacy, lack of preparedness, and negative traits associated with ambition will expose the impact gender-based doubts have on the leadership gap in our profession and move us closer to finding solutions.



These ten big ideas demand a call to action that each of us in academic libraries can respond to. As you read this book, think: What can I do today to foster leadership skill development in my organization? How can I support my colleagues who may or may not want to enter into these senior roles? What role do I have in deciding how teams are formed in my library? What are my career goals and what pathways are available to me to achieve those goals? What support do I need to foster development in others and in myself, regardless of career aspirations? What can we learn from reading or listening to each other's stories, and how can we leverage those narratives to create the changes advocated for here? It is only once we begin asking these questions of ourselves that we can begin answering them as a profession.

Review of the Literature

Examining three related bodies of leadership literature—academic libraries, higher education, and management more generally—can best help us understand the motivations and decisions that guide a librarian’s career path and entry into senior administrative positions. Exploring the similarities and differences between those advanced positions and traditional librarian duties proves a useful starting point for determining how to develop a leadership pipeline. To explore the landscape of leadership and management in academic libraries, the following literature review is divided into three sections. The first is a snapshot of demographics of senior library administrators and the core competencies expected of both library administrators and library professionals. The second section explores career pathways, specifically how and why practitioners enter leadership and management positions. The third section is a discussion of skill gaps. The final section of the chapter is a document analysis of thirty-nine job descriptions advertising for ADs in 2017–2018. By analyzing these postings, we can better understand the skills and experiences hiring managers emphasize and expect.

Demographics

To better contextualize the career paths of the participants in this study, it is helpful to draw on an article analyzing demographic data captured through an ARL study in 2015. Stanley Wilder, dean of libraries at Louisiana State University, begins his analysis of ARL libraries with the provocative phrase, “Library professionals have never been older.”⁸ While the study only gathered data from professionals in ARL libraries, the findings are relevant to the profession more broadly. Nearly a quarter, or 24 percent, of librarians in ARLs were between sixty to sixty-four years of age, which is an upward trend from 9 percent in 1986.⁹ In 2015, a professional’s average age was forty-nine years old. There were three times as many professionals—9 percent of the population—as there were in 1986 who were sixty-five to sixty-nine years old in 2015.¹⁰ Although trending older, this statistic doesn’t signify professionals forgo retirement altogether. A mere 1.5 percent of the population was reported to be seventy years of age or older.¹¹

It is therefore of little surprise that the demographic data reflects an aging cohort of administrators. Thirty-nine percent of ARL directors were over sixty-five in the 2015 study, as compared with just 3 percent in 1986.¹² When Canadian demographics are removed from the population, 45 percent of ARL library directors were sixty-five years of age or older, and 14 percent were over seventy-five years old.¹³ Wilder poses several possible reasons for

this trend: “Maybe directors are facing increased pressure to remain in place from their administrators” or “the increasing gap between average compensation as reflected in the ARL Salary Survey . . . drives that group to make different choices as to retirement.”¹⁴ Wilder draws no definitive conclusions from the data as to why administrators remain in their positions or first become senior leaders in what we might think of as the traditional retirement years.

Wilder urges the profession to consider the possible ramifications of an aging leadership cohort. He asserts, “If the profession is to avoid outright extinction, it must at some point fill the vacancies created by retirements, refreshing its ranks with younger individuals.”¹⁵ However, from the hiring demographics, ARL libraries do not appear to be doing this. Although 70 percent of library school graduates were thirty-five years old or younger, the average age of a person hired into an entry-level professional position was thirty-five years old in 2015.¹⁶ Since 1986, new graduate hires have shrunk from 35 percent to 26 percent.¹⁷ Hiring managers in ARL libraries are more likely to hire a librarian with prior work experience or who may be entering the profession after time spent in a related field. Wilder estimates from the 2015 demographic data that by 2020 there will be 689 vacancies from the sixty to sixty-four-year-old cohort of current professionals. He estimates that another 790 vacancies will come from the over sixty-five-year-old cohort, resulting in a total of 1,479 vacancies.¹⁸ Given budgetary constraints, there may not be funding available to fill all of these vacancies. However, this data and Wilder’s conclusions, compel the profession to develop the next generation of leaders to ensure the stability of academic libraries.

Differences in leadership styles between generations provide a way of explaining much-needed alternative leadership models for constructing a leadership pipeline. There exists a small body of literature that analyzes the possible impact of one’s generation on their leadership and management skills and style. To address the leadership gap in academic libraries, a clearer understanding of the current demographics and impact of those demographics on developing skill sets is needed. Focusing on Generation X, or those librarians born between 1961 and 1982, Martin Wallace, Rebecca Tolley-Stokes, and Erik Estep’s edited volume includes a section exploring this connection. In their chapter, Breanne Kirsch and Jonathan Kirsch argue that the prevailing Generation X management style establishes “possible relationships, creating flexible work environments, using technology effectively, and resolving conflict.”¹⁹ As a generation that entered the workforce as the internet first developed, these librarians have seen the impact of technology on the field of library science. Rising into the ranks of middle and senior managers, Generation X librarians appear to focus less on age and rank and more on a collaborative approach to work. The authors go on to argue that those in Generation X “are less interested in the age of the people who work under them than in the ideas and interests they generate . . . by having an open and collaborative approach to technology” they use “technology to effectively improve employee relations.”²⁰ This work style provides a foundation, which then informs their practice as librarians.

In her chapter, Jessica Clemens examines the impact of being among those in the sandwich generation and the opportunity that position affords Generation X managers. She states: “Younger professionals will require more training and reassurances, while boomers’ rigidity will need to be mitigated.”²¹ Moreover, Clemens argues that Generation X librarians are in a unique position to bring about much-needed change to academic libraries. In contrast to previous changes, which have been “simply layers over the same library of

decades ago,” Clemens urges Generation X librarians to “find a new model . . . to meet the changing and challenging needs of academe . . . to meet user requirements.”²² Kathy Shields and Lynda Kellam offer several possible approaches for how Generation X can meet these needs and bring about the change that Clemens calls for. In their chapter, they argue, “Job descriptions and duties could be tailored or shifted to fit both the needs of the library and the interests or talents of the individual person.”²³ The kind of flexibility Shields and Kellam describe would have an impact on those who are not interested in working solely as administrators, due to the shift in identity they experience as their roles—and perceived value—change from that of practitioner to library leader.

Scant data exist that drills down into specifics of how current library leaders prepare the next generation. In their 2007 analysis, Hernon and Rossiter offer recommendations and areas for future research in their book. They note, “It is important to identify and nurture those willing to become middle managers who also have leadership potential.”²⁴ Approaching leadership and management from a hierarchical lens, the authors suggest that management experience and skills come before leadership potential. As Jolie Graybill argues in her 2014 article, “Millennials possess the sheer numbers to eventually fill these vacated management slots,” such as those Wilder highlights in his analysis.²⁵ Therefore, it behooves current library administrators to actively cultivate an interest in assuming leadership and management roles in libraries among their newer and younger colleagues.

Demystifying pathways into leadership roles for newer professionals encourages them to see a possible career path trajectory. When surveying how millennials felt about leadership and their roles in academic libraries, Graybill found that “50 percent perceived barriers exist in assuming leadership roles in their organizations.”²⁶ Despite perceived barriers, 60 percent of participants expressed an interest in assuming a leadership role in their organization.²⁷ Library administrators should be transparent about the processes or pathways into leadership, as well as the skills needed to successfully fulfill those duties. The majority of Graybill’s participants were born from 1982 to 1984, or the earliest years of the millennial cohort entering the workforce. Returning to this group as the cohort matures and gains further experience would be an important contribution to the literature, as at the time of the survey, the participants would have been in the first five years of their careers. Their perceptions of leadership and interest in entering leadership and management roles will change over time.

Core Competencies

Understanding the current demographic makeup of our library staff and administrators is one important component in the development of a leadership pipeline. Understanding the core competencies and skills expected of librarians is a second component. The main competency expected of professional librarians is domain expertise. In 2009, the American Library Association (ALA) released a document titled, “ALA’s Core Competencies of Librarianship.” This document offers breadth but fewer specifics to guide the profession. The eight competency areas include foundations of the profession; information resources; organization of recorded knowledge and information; technology, knowledge, and skills; reference and user services; research; continuing education and lifelong learning; and administration and management.²⁸ These eight areas accurately encompass the professional training that

most professional librarians receive in library science graduate programs. Similar to other professions, their training enables them to specialize in a specific area of librarianship. The competencies do not include specifics about the kinds of leadership and management skills required of librarians. This absence of information speaks to a systemic problem throughout the library profession.

In response to these high-level competencies, and recognizing a need to foster the development of leadership and management skills, the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA), a division of ALA, began work to determine which competencies professionals should develop.²⁹ The resulting emerging leaders' project identified forty-nine competencies. Narrowed down based on survey responses from 282 members, LLAMA endorsed the following ten competencies to be nested within ALA's eighth and final core competency: administration and management.³⁰ Those competencies are:

- communication skills
- change management
- team building
- collaboration and partnerships
- emotional intelligence
- problem-solving
- evidence-based decision making
- conflict resolution
- budget creation and presentation
- forward-thinking
- critical thinking
- ethics
- project planning and scheduling
- marketing and advocacy

More than 50 percent of respondents indicated skills related to communication, change management, and team building as fundamental skills all leaders and managers should develop. Nearly half of all respondents—44.7 percent and 40.8 percent respectively—selected collaboration and partnerships and emotional intelligence.³¹ Of these competencies, the vast majority are soft skills, not learned in a library science program, where the focus is on domain-based knowledge.

Unfortunately, the publicly available whitepaper published on LLAMA's website does not include demographic data about respondents. Knowing how many of the respondents held formal leadership or management roles would add important context for these recommendations. In addition, learning what percentage of respondents were active practitioners as opposed to library science faculty would also be useful when distilling the results. The authors of the white paper conclude future steps for the competencies committee, including "publishing and promoting the foundational competencies to LLAMA membership, and to other divisions of ALA."³² The committee does not present specific outreach or promotion efforts, a timeline for implementing programs to develop these skills among professionals across the field, or how the division might assess such implementation efforts.³³ The guidelines include at least one citation for further reading to guide those who may be interested in

learning more about a particular competency. Such a bibliography makes a valuable contribution to the profession and to the goal of leadership and management skill development.

The academic library literature and the ALA core competencies indicate that librarians perceive themselves to be most effective as they develop their domain expertise in a particular functional area achieved through a lifelong commitment to learning. As the seventh area in ALA's core competencies emphasize, professional librarians embody the "principles related to the teaching and learning of concepts, processes and skills used in seeking, evaluating, and using recorded knowledge and information."³⁴ In the higher education literature, Senge's description of the learning organization embodies this commitment to lifelong learning. In learning organizations, all staff should consider themselves "responsible for building organizations where people are continuously expanding their capabilities to shape their future—that is, leaders are responsible for learning."³⁵ Fostering a learning organization challenges traditional concepts of librarianship which previously had less emphasis on developing interpersonal skills and encouraging individual growth.

Important to developing a leadership career ladder, and ultimately a pipeline in academic libraries, is an analysis of necessary skills for senior leaders. Few studies examine leadership traits and competencies required of senior leadership teams, as opposed to individual library deans or practitioners. In Patricia Kreitz's study, she found when asking library directors to identify the most important traits for being successful members of a senior leadership team, administrators shared "cognitive ability to deal with complex scenarios or situations" as a top trait.³⁶ From their perspective, library deans set the direction for the organization, with the senior leadership team "more directly focused on running the library."³⁷ Further, ADs need to be able to "solve complex problems, to engage staff with diverse talents, to lead teams, to build consensus and share decision-making."³⁸ Those same skills are sorely needed to be most effective within the leadership and management structure of a university. Kreitz's study did not include reflections from ADs or members of senior leadership teams in libraries. The skills she and others refer to, which I have included in this literature review, offer important evidence, but little has been gathered from these middle managers themselves. The data I collected addresses this silence in the literature.

Career Pathways: Entering Leadership and Management Positions

To be interested in assuming administrative positions, librarians still need to see themselves fundamentally as librarians first and administrators second. As ALA's core competencies emphasize, librarians develop significant expertise in an area of the field, and their initial entry into the profession depends on that level of domain expertise. Most librarians fear a loss of contact with users, which tends to characterize the role of an administrator—less contact with users in favor of a more external focus on a variety of stakeholders.

As a result, ADs experience an identity crisis as they move into senior management roles where soft skills enable them to feel successful in their administrative roles. No longer responsible for the day-to-day operations of the library, their positions as facilitators of library work force them to question their value and role as library practitioners. In his study, Ronald Burt focused on how leaders developed their skills over the course of their careers and what personal benefits they gained as a result. Burt concludes that as managers move

"higher up in the corporate hierarchy, work is increasingly political as well as technical."³⁹ Senior administrators retain their technical expertise and need to quickly learn how to move through increasingly political situations by applying soft skills. Burt argues: "High-rank managers have to think and behave more like equity players in the firm rather than getting along as employees working for a wage."⁴⁰ It becomes more and more challenging to maintain those personal relationships with non-managers, as librarians move up in the organizational hierarchy. Burt's use of economic theory provides a useful starting point for how library administrators and librarians navigate their own career paths. Developing a career ladder with pause points to consider skill gaps and future opportunities helps mitigate this identity crisis and aid librarians' transition into leadership and management roles, as they feel more prepared and aware of how they might apply their skills.

The higher education leadership literature points to a similar distinction between administrative responsibilities and the life of a faculty member. Lee Bolman and Joan Gallos argue that leading from the middle presents unique challenges. Speaking directly to the idea of an identity shift as one becomes a manager, the authors contend, "Living in two worlds also means that much of the work and accomplishments of those in the middle are invisible to, or dismissed by, one constituent group or another."⁴¹ Bolman and Gallos also analyze the tension surrounding the concept of "leading up," which has tremendous relevance when considering librarians' career path and goals. The authors argue, "Leading up does not equate to self-serving manipulation or becoming a lackey. It is instead a strategic and orchestrated approach for developing clear expectations and communication patterns that enable you and your supervisor to work productively together on behalf of both personal and institutional goals."⁴² Different than skills needed for their domain expertise, leadership and management work requires a variety of soft skills needed to "lead up" and to foster a positive organizational culture.

In her work, Maggie Farrell observes three levels of leadership within the library context: supervisor, manager, and leader. While a supervisor oversees a specific task like stacks management, a manager finds herself "moving away from subject expertise to more management expertise."⁴³ As a result of this leading from the middle position, "specific expertise is still required to effectively manage a department and this expertise will initially demonstrate confidence that others have in the manager as they assume their role."⁴⁴ Using a more traditional distinction between leader and manager than other arguments presented here, Farrell believes "the leader brings information back to the library and connects the library to the broader organization, profession, community, and/or the environment."⁴⁵ Farrell's model provides one approach for analyzing the identity shift that emerging leaders experience as they move through these roles during the course of their careers. In addition to the linear and hierarchical approach Farrell presents in her work, the profession also should consider non-linear career paths and alternative leadership models to address our leadership gap.

Three non-hierarchical leadership models Bolman and Gallos present include the servant, catalyst, and coach. A leader can adapt each of these frameworks as the organizational culture or situation requires. They define the servant's role to advocate and balance institutional priorities. The catalyst role focuses on removing barriers to facilitate work and empower others or "helping people get the information, resources, and leeway that they need."⁴⁶ Similarly, the coach provides support and "teaches, mentors, and provides developmental opportunities to sharpen skills and understandings."⁴⁷ This model encourages

non-positional authority and empowering others to meet the evolving needs of library users through innovative services and leadership.

Moving away from theoretical frameworks for understanding pathways into leadership, the case studies presented in *Choosing to Lead* and *Crucible Moments* provide important avenues through which to understand personal motivation and entry points into leadership. As Mark Puente articulates in the foreword of Antonia Olivas's *Choosing to Lead*, the contributors are "challenging the reader to think holistically to consider how issues of self-development, self-reflection, and self-care should be intrinsic to this process."⁴⁸ Olivas's book represents the first treatment of leadership stories told by those from underrepresented groups, whose narratives describe "why one might pursue management or leadership positions in LIS, the challenges that people from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups face when they attempt to enter that landscape, and practical strategies for developing oneself to ensure success."⁴⁹ Focusing on the positive rather than on criticisms of the profession, Olivas and her contributors offer useful case studies for those seeking to learn from the experiences of others. As Olivas states, the scope of each chapter is "to focus on the main reasons they *stayed* in the profession."⁵⁰ Further research is needed to explore methods of library leadership retention. We must acknowledge and accept that not all leaders and managers will want to remain in those roles, and we must provide support as careers take non-linear paths.

Motivations for why library leaders first enter such roles is a critical part of my book's focus. Presenting a broader perspective on career pathways and entrances into leadership, Steven Bell's *Crucible Moments* focuses on "the passion that motivates ordinary librarians, which is where librarians begin to choose the leadership path. Sometimes the choice is intentional but for some it comes as somewhat of an accident—or the result of a crucible moment. What the stories have in common are two things: inspiration and influence."⁵¹ The contributors to Bell's work include reflections on their motivation for pursuing leadership positions and, importantly, how prepared they felt they were to advance. One contributor reflected: "At each step along the way, I was motivated to fill a need—either personally or for the organization."⁵² In *Choosing to Lead*, Hector Escobar shares his practical reason for choosing to advance into leadership positions: "You have to keep life interesting for you and your colleagues."⁵³ More specifically, building community in the library and one's self-motivation led others to seek more advanced positions. The participants in the research for my book shared similar sources of motivation to pursue advanced positions that Olivas draws attention to, including a "sense of obligation" and overcoming "feelings of contentment."⁵⁴ In her conclusion, Olivas argues, "As time goes on, librarians' individual motivations to lead can change, so current library leaders must learn to recognize those changes and be flexible to encourage growth in their librarians."⁵⁵ Surprisingly, none of the case studies in Bell or Olivas's volumes include financial incentives as a motivation to lead. The literature presented here will provide a theoretical anchor to the experiences of the interviewees analyzed in subsequent chapters.

Unfortunately, making the decision to advance does not always mean one has the training or confidence to be successful. In *Crucible Moments*, Bell and other contributors share valuable stories of leadership errors as well as moments of triumph. His book also identifies missing training opportunities for leaders that few other texts explore. In his own reflection, Bell remembers: "I felt wholly unprepared to take the reins of leadership, even at an

operation smaller than the one I was leaving. The chasm between assistant director and director is wider than imaginable.”⁵⁶ To close his skills gap, Bell sought out support from his network as well as formal training. He participated in “the university’s management academy [which] was only marginally helpful but it did provide a few concrete skills and a support network within the institution’s managerial cohort.”⁵⁷ Developing a network as a result of participating in a leadership development program is a critical support structure emerging leaders rely on as they pursue advanced roles. Those leading training programs, supervisors, and professional associations should encourage library leaders to form networks to provide necessary support throughout their careers.

Skill Gaps

MANAGERIAL SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Derived from empirical research done with higher education institutions, James Kouzes and Barry Posner argue that regardless of one’s position or profession, there are five practices of leadership that all should embody: “Having a high degree of personal credibility,” being “effective in meeting job-related demands,” being “able to increase motivation level” in others and in oneself, the ability to be “successful in representing the group or team to upper management,” “having a high-performance team,” “fostering loyalty and commitment,” and finally, “reducing absenteeism, turnover, and stress levels.”⁵⁸ These traits apply to librarianship and library leadership as well and were referred to by my participants as desired leadership qualities. In order to develop those skills, leaders must first do what Warren Bennis describes as “mastering the context” of their organizations.⁵⁹ To do so requires that leaders work on “becoming self-expressive; listening to the inner voice; learning from the right mentors; and giving oneself over to a guiding vision.”⁶⁰ Being able to create and articulate a vision, form and draw support from a network, possess a strong inner constitution, and personal code of ethics are critical components to successful leadership development.

The tangible development of leadership skills remains unaddressed in many library science graduate program curricula. According to the “administration and management” domain expectation in ALA’s core competencies, library administrators and managers should embody “the principles of planning and budgeting . . . effective personnel practices and Human Resources development . . . assessment and evaluation of library services and their outcomes.”⁶¹ Both library practitioners and administrators will be expected to do the work of “developing partnerships, collaborations, networks, and other structures with stakeholders within communities served . . . issues relating to, and methods for, principled, transformational leadership.”⁶² To address the absence of leadership development training in library science programs, the profession and individual libraries should provide formal and informal opportunities over the course of one’s career to build these skills.

In his study of reference and cataloging managers in ARLs, Michael Rooney concludes: “The profession as a whole lacks concrete standards on what qualifications middle managers in academic libraries should possess and what levels of continued management education should be required of department heads.”⁶³ According to his results, a startling 36 percent of first-time department heads received no management training outside of a possible management class in library school. Managers assume positions without first developing the skills and competencies through specific training opportunities that enable them to

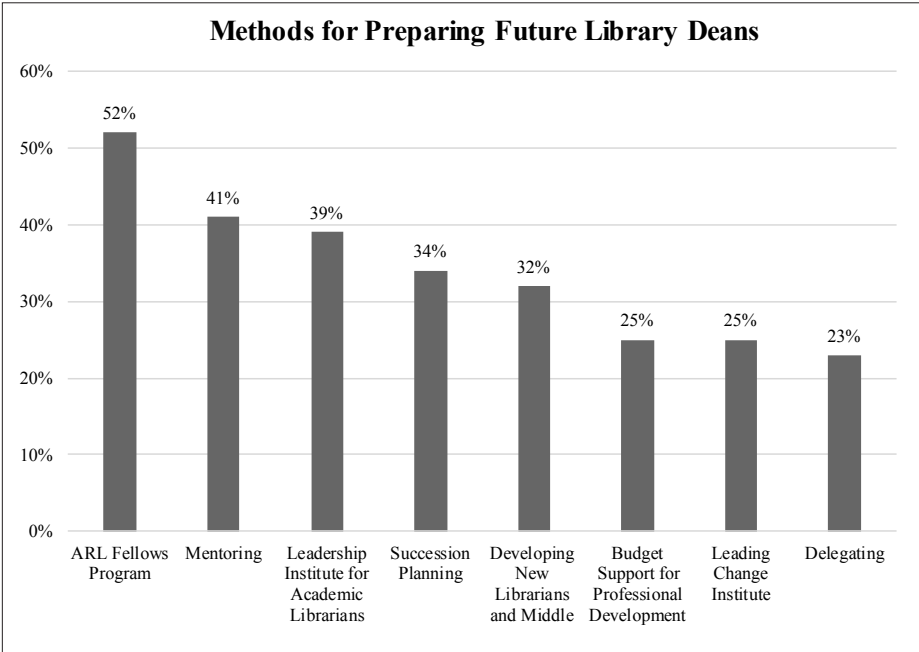


Chart 1
Methods for Preparing Future Library Deans

effectively accomplish the organization’s goals. Learning theory through advanced degree programs, off-site training, and online courses provide the theoretical foundations upon which emerging leaders can begin their skill development.

Understanding the opportunities deans provide their staff to engage in leadership skill development helps to identify potential training gaps. In 2016, John Meier published findings from his survey of ARL directors. When asked “How are you preparing future deans and university librarians?”, top responses included a variety of methods. (Please refer to chart 1 for specific examples.)

Over half of the participants cited the ARL Leadership Fellows Program, while only one quarter selected delegating as part of the training they provide. From this data, the profession seems to favor formal leadership training programs over informal opportunities to develop leadership skills. When asked how prepared the profession is for the next wave of retirements and vacancies in senior leadership positions, 67 percent responded favorably. In this study prospective senior leaders were not participants. Therefore the data reflects the perceptions of those already in those roles. My research addresses this gap in the literature. For the third of respondents who responded in the negative, Meier concluded: “The profession is not prepared with a sufficient pool of applicants for these positions. They are working to address this shortage with their organizations, but some cite lack of interest, while others think the profession should do more.”⁶⁴ To successfully close the leadership gap, both individual organizations and the profession must develop initiatives to offer training opportunities for the next generation and encouragement to seek advanced positions.

Further research is needed to assess the lack of interest Meier identified and how the profession could provide further support. Meier goes on to argue in his article:

Unless steps are taken to improve the next level of library leaders, the profession may find itself short on experienced library administrators. Since previous supervisory experience is still the most important qualification for a management job, new library professionals often find themselves in a frustrating Catch-22, in which they must have previous management experience to be hired for a management position but cannot acquire that experience if no one will hire them.⁶⁵

Providing short-term or interim leadership and management assignments is one approach to address this lack of experience Meier calls attention to. Connecting the informal and formal training Meier's respondents selected with opportunities for emerging leaders to apply the skills developed through those programs is critical, as we strive to close the leadership gap.

Library deans and senior leaders play a critical role by providing opportunities for emerging leaders to apply new skills. Told from the perspective of a library director in Barbara L. Dewey's 2004 article, she argues that beginning with those early in their careers, all librarians have a responsibility to develop leadership skills. Dewey believes "leadership for a successful future demands full participation."⁶⁶ The library dean may provide the overall vision to guide the direction of the organization; as such, that person should be "mobilizing, energizing, and providing a focus for others in taking responsibility for defining the values and fulfilling the aspirations of the library. Success depends on this joint commitment."⁶⁷ Going forward, library deans and senior leaders need to provide non-hierarchical leadership opportunities for their staffs to create a multitude of pathways into leadership which do not rest on positional authority.

The second step after developing such non-hierarchical opportunities will be to scaffold skill development. Farrell presents a framework of building blocks to structure leadership development. Originating in the idea that leaders are made, not born, Farrell offers a phased approach to leadership development. Farrell underscores, "Nowhere in library school did we discuss leadership and how to motivate and challenge a group of individuals."⁶⁸ Similar to Dewey's role as a library director, Farrell's position as dean affords her a particular perspective on leadership development. She reflects: "As I look around my organization, there are many who also require these skills, perhaps to a varying degree."⁶⁹ Given this foundation of pre-existing leadership skills, Farrell says a "librarian draws upon those skills as the position and/or situation warrants."⁷⁰ To be able to apply them, librarians should first receive encouragement and feedback about their skill development.

UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The most successful library administrators are those who understand university structures and determine their planning and organizational goals to fit within the broader organizational culture. Librarians' understanding of the institution's organizational culture and how to operate within it enables them to more easily enter into library administration, where William Tierney contends that leaders should consider the broader framework of

decision-making and leadership through six frames: environment, mission, socialization, information, strategy, and leadership.⁷¹ Only by understanding how organizations work at the micro and macro levels can leaders, as Tierney argues, successfully move their organizations forward.

As each librarian moves through her career, she will inevitably encounter different forms of organizational culture. While connected to the specific occupation of librarianship, many components of culture remain universal, regardless of profession. Edgar Schein includes the following components when describing culture:

- observed behavioral regularities when people interact
- group norms
- espoused values
- formal philosophy
- rules of the game
- climate
- embedded skills
- shared meanings
- root metaphors or integrating symbols
- formal rituals and celebrations
- habits of thinking, mental models, and/or linguistic paradigms⁷²

To be effective, each new leader or manager must understand the cultural context of her organization.

It falls on all librarians to develop an understanding of organizational culture. As Schein argues, “If we understand culture better, we will understand ourselves better and recognize some of the forces acting within us that define who we are.”⁷³ As Bolman and Gallos argue, a new leader does not build an organization’s culture from nothing, rather “they inherit raw materials from the past—values, beliefs, artifacts, stories, heroes and heroines, rituals and practices. These symbolic building blocks offer academic leaders a place to start in sorting out and diagnosing their unit or institution’s culture.”⁷⁴ In higher education, the pre-existing culture is complicated by the strong collegial culture of the academy and “by pervasive faculty scorn for bureaucracy, administrators, and hierarchy.”⁷⁵ It becomes necessary for library leaders to provide a vision reflecting organization culture as well as respond to employee perceptions or misperceptions of what leadership is and how that role facilitates the library’s achievements and ability to meet user needs.

BEING A CHANGE AGENT

Encouraging librarians—regardless of their position within an organizational hierarchy—to become change agents will help close the leadership gap in our profession. Learning how to be a change agent provides the necessary skills and experience to then lead change, a key aspect of any leadership role. This flexibility will better position emerging leaders to anticipate and respond to the evolving nature of scholarship, the threat to residential colleges, and rising tuition costs—all of which affect the library as a part of the university system. Komives, Lucas, and McMahon state, “We no longer simply manage change, we now pursue change.”⁷⁶ As the authors define it, change agents “need to help others see

and feel the emotion associated with a change effort.”⁷⁷ Early opportunities to lead teams and pursue new initiatives as part of a librarian’s temporary responsibilities teach change management skills in a lower-stakes environment than formal management positions, which then help libraries to build their skill set overtime rather than first being thrust into a role without such skills and experience.

Foreseeing and embracing change challenges the reactive nature of the library profession. Both Rosabeth Kanter and John Kotter explore the common reasons why transformations fail in organizations. Kanter uses the term “change mastery” in her analysis of American corporations and their need for strong leaders.⁷⁸ As she defines it, “organizational change consists in part of a series of emerging constructions of reality, including revision of the past, to correspond to the requisites of new players and new demands.”⁷⁹ Kotter argues that the first reason why organizational change fails lies in “not establishing a great sense of urgency . . . getting a transformation program started required the aggressive cooperation of many individuals. Without motivation, people won’t help, and the effort goes nowhere.”⁸⁰ Librarians must be encouraged over time to develop skills enabling them to motivate others, develop new programs, and shift organizational culture, which, as Kotter describes, requires a variety of soft skills.

Shifting organizational culture cannot rest with one library leader. It takes time and multiple perspectives and skill sets to be successful. Kanter argues in favor of reading the institutional landscape before charting a vision and moving an organization forward. Library leaders who fail to correctly interpret both their organization’s culture and the broader landscape risk falling prey to Kotter’s eighth reason why transformations fail, which is that leaders fail at “anchoring changes in the corporation’s culture . . . [a] conscious attempt to show people how the new approaches, behaviors, and attributes have helped improve performance.”⁸¹ Providing support for all staff within the organization to encourage them to see themselves as part of the change and effort to move the library forward mitigates the challenges Kotter raises. Non-positional leadership opportunities distribute the ways in which a library implements changes, which fosters a more inclusive organizational culture where staff feel empowered.

As the literature of library science, higher education, and leadership and management reflect, organizations require strong leaders to enact and inspire change. The analysis in the following chapters contributes to the existing body of literature. Building on personal experiences of ADs, this book explores issues related to skill gaps, training opportunities, and personal motivation in order to encourage more library professionals to enter into formal leadership roles in libraries by creating a leadership pipeline to facilitate the pathways into such positions. Previous studies, such as those presented here, almost exclusively rely on evidence to identify leadership gaps in libraries; few offer suggestions to address the problem from the perspective of senior-level library leaders.

Document Analysis

Part of each library leader’s story is the job ad they respond to—how the position description piqued their interest, the explanation of duties, opportunities for growth, and the future direction of the organization. While my primary work consisted of interviews, I performed a document analysis of positions posted during my interview period and data analysis phase

to ground my conclusions. Thirty-nine positions were posted during that six-month time-frame.⁸² To analyze the job ads, I conducted a frequency analysis. I omitted a series of stop words when preparing my analysis.⁸³ The frequency analysis indicated that one hundred words appeared more than twenty-four times in the postings. The most common words across the ads were:

- service
- research
- leadership
- development
- management

In this section, I'll share the desired experiences employers emphasized and the hard and soft skills the ads specified. The section concludes with a discussion of how the language in the job ads contributes to our understanding of how academic libraries articulate the necessary skills and experiences hiring managers emphasize as desirable to be successful in leadership and management positions.

DESIRED EXPERIENCES

Each ad specified evidence of educational background, service, and professional engagement. Five years of progressively responsible experience was the most frequent number of years required for these positions. Unsurprisingly, an ALA-accredited master's degree appeared with high frequency as well. Service most often referred to how the candidate would support the kinds of programs each library offered their faculty and students. Specifically, the ads emphasized the role ADs play in research and scholarship at the institution and the collections the libraries made available in support of those endeavors. Demonstrating experience creating innovative solutions was another theme across the job ads. Professional engagement, with evidence of research and publishing, were commonly listed preferred qualifications. When describing the educational backgrounds, service models, and professional engagement the employer sought, the ads used words including:

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| • change | • leadership | • creative |
| • innovation | • management | • national |
| • emerging | • strategic | • local |
| • trends | • diversity | |

DOMAIN-BASED SKILLS

The domain-based skills described in the ads most commonly referred to coordinating daily tasks in the areas of the candidate's portfolio. Verbs, including "coordinate," "oversee," and "manage" described the expectation related to these other responsibilities. The domain-based skills fell into one of three portfolios: IT, public services, or collections management. There was one posting for an AD for special collections, which included desired expertise across

the three portfolios listed above. Below is a sample of the words used to describe what and how ADs would coordinate work:

- projects
- technology
- data
- metadata
- budgeting
- teaching
- humanities
- sciences
- marketing
- user
- digital
- collections
- service
- research
- support
- strategic
- development

HARD AND SOFT SKILLS

Feeling prepared to assume leadership and management roles will help break down the gender-based doubts in our profession, as well as play a critical part in developing career pathways to encourage librarians to seek advanced roles. Understanding the terms used to describe desired skills becomes an important part of closing the leadership gap. Below are samples of commonly used words when referring to hard and soft skills.

HARD SKILLS

- budgeting
- strategic planning
- planning

SOFT SKILLS

- interpersonal
- analytical
- collaboration
- communication
- support
- innovation
- develop
- leadership
- team
- organizational
- commitment
- needs

Used in a variety of ways, “development” referred to collection development, enhancing services, professional development and engagement, planning for facilities, budget oversight, and assessment. One ad specified the candidate:

Participates in the development of assessment strategies and data-informed decision making, enhancing support for future choices and changes in library service, including the long-range strategic and tactical planning process with respect to the future growth and development of the Library, as well as the development, preparation, and management of budgets and other related reports in concert with the goals and objectives of the Library and the University.⁸⁴

Only one job ad used the word “development” in the list of responsibilities in reference to fundraising. In a posting for an associate dean for the Special Collections, Archives, and Rare Books Department, the ad emphasized fundraising as a core duty; the job ad stated:

“Supports fundraising and development activities.”⁸⁵ Posting two ads at the same time, one library advertised for an associate university librarian for research and instruction, and an associate dean for scholarly resources and discovery. Both ads included fundraising and development in the narrative, but not in the list of responsibilities.

TAKE-AWAYS

The results of the frequency analysis indicate the experiences and desired skills academic libraries believe will best support and advance their organizations. The ads themselves did not suggest candidates would be responsible for performing specific functional duties of librarianship. Rather, academic libraries advertising for senior leadership positions emphasize how the candidate will contribute to supporting the core values of the library and its organizational culture. One ad emphasized, “The AUL collaborates with other senior members of CUL to provide vision and leadership for library services that support the evolving needs of the Cornell community. The AUL helps to define and support the CUL’s strategic directions; supervises senior library directors; and provides overall direction to academic librarians and staff members in libraries on the Ithaca campus and beyond.”⁸⁶ Providing direction requires library leaders to develop and articulate a vision, motivate and encourage others to realize that vision, and engage with stakeholders within and outside of the university to secure buy-in and support.

Fostering diversity and creativity within the organization was a second core value libraries emphasized. One ad specified, “It is important that the incumbent recognizes and values how diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is an essential part of our College and Conservatory culture.”⁸⁷ Being able to articulate a library’s culture and values ensures candidates embody such intangible qualities to further the organization’s goals.

Having a broad understanding of academic libraries within the higher education landscape was a third core value the postings emphasized. Referring to the importance of engagement within and beyond their university system, one posting for the associate dean for strategic initiatives described: “This position requires a firm grounding in the world of academic libraries and excellent communication skills, along with a professional reputation for strategic innovation in communication, outreach and academic partnerships locally and internationally.”⁸⁸ These narratives indicate a strong preference for candidates who can support faculty and student scholarship and learning while fostering and maintaining collaborations within and beyond university communities.

Extrapolating from this six-month snapshot, academic libraries are interested in hiring a candidate with developed soft skills and related experiences with leadership and management. With one or two exceptions, domain expertise was less important or absent from the job descriptions. There seems to be a growing trend whereby libraries post multiple senior leadership positions at the same time, with roughly the same description. The experience and domain expertise of the successful candidate then impact the composition of the person’s portfolio once in the position. For example, one of the library postings specified:

As key members of the Grand Valley State University Libraries’ senior management team, the ADs ensure organizational effectiveness and efficiency and share in responsibility for decision-making, resource management, and development of policies for

operations and services as well as library-wide planning, assessment and programming. . . . Both ADs play a leadership role in promoting teamwork, diversity, and inclusiveness within GVSU Libraries and the campus.⁸⁹

Such similarities speak to the importance of finding a candidate with the best set of soft skills. The language in the ads indicates the administration would then tailor a portfolio to reflect that person's domain expertise.

As Meier concludes in his 2016 article, "The Future of Academic Libraries: Conversations with Today's Leaders about Tomorrow," administrators have begun taking a more team-based approach when hiring at the senior level. The job ads I analyzed reflect this trend, as several advertised for more than one AD at a time, also suggests a growing team-based approach to upper-level management. Rather than an AD working in a silo managing the departments in her one portfolio, these job ads indicate an ongoing trend to create a senior leadership team working together to find holistic solutions to best serve the organization and its users.

The shift away from applying purely domain expertise to positions requiring greater command of soft skills forces administrators to question their identity as librarians, and how their role dictates the ways in which they make contributions to academic libraries. As librarians' sense of themselves and their role in libraries continue to evolve throughout their careers—as these job descriptions indicate—their sense of personal value shifts as administrative work becomes their core duty, replacing the domain-based work of librarianship. Their interest and motivation in pursuing those roles will greatly impact the pool of candidates and, ultimately, the success and vitality of academic libraries in the future. Sharing job descriptions within an organization encourages emerging leaders to better envision the responsibilities and skill sets required of senior leaders and can aid them as they develop their own skills. Demystifying senior leadership positions also helps middle managers to better understand how their sense of themselves as practitioners changes as they advance into more senior roles. Developing a career ladder to scaffold the skills employers emphasize in their job postings will help prepare emerging leaders to move into more senior-level positions.

Methods

Using both semi-structured interviews and frequency analyses provided the basis for my research findings. Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin state in a semi-structured interview the researcher has a “specific topic to learn about, prepares a limited number of questions in advance, and plans to ask follow-up questions.”⁹⁰ This method enables the researcher to use the interview protocol as a roadmap of questions to ask while leaving enough latitude to respond to a participant’s comments with follow-up questions.

In their preface, Rubin and Rubin describe the strengths of interviewing when they state, “Rather than stripping away context, reducing people’s experiences to numbers, in-depth interviewing approaches a problem in its natural setting, explores related and contradictory themes and concepts, and points out the missing and the subtle.”⁹¹ Interviewing allows the researcher to explore a topic in depth and to draw meaningful conclusions about the human experience. Interviewing places value on the individual and their personal experiences rather than on the general experiences of a broader population. Learning about these experiences enables a researcher to tailor solutions or draw conclusions about the topic of study that meets the needs of the local population and will suit the local context.

A single-person interview is an effective method for soliciting further information about a particular topic, either in response to a participant’s response or in a pre-planned question. When interviewing one person, the interviewer can use probes and follow-up questions to gather additional information about an area of interest. When an interviewer successfully develops her protocol and series of questions that use neutral language and do not lead the participant to respond in a certain way, they can avoid the “polarization of ideas . . . that can potentially cause unreliable answers.”⁹² Probes and follow-up questions enabled me to fully explore the details of each participant’s career path and their motivations for pursuing advanced positions with formal leadership and management responsibilities.

One of the central limitations of interviewing is the strong possibility that the interviewer will unintentionally bias the interviewees’ responses. Rubin and Rubin caution against “imposing your own understanding in ways that limit the interviewees’ freedom to respond.”⁹³ Interviewers may ask questions using phrasing or language that lead the interviewee to offer a particular response that may or may not accurately represent their experience. To guard against this limitation, I defined the terms I used throughout each interview to establish a common understanding of the terms. I also asked the same core questions of each participant, while constructing probes based on their specific responses and experiences.

Rubin and Rubin also argue that interviewers risk “asking questions that virtually force answers into simple categories, for reality is more complicated and subtle.”⁹⁴ When conducting an interview, the interviewer’s role remains less of a facilitator and more of an active participant. Despite my providing definitions of key terms, participants interpreted

the questions in their own ways, in part based on their organizational context and career experiences.

My data collection leveraged qualitative methods. I conducted semi-structured interviews in the fall of 2017 with twenty-three library professionals whose title or responsibilities could be described as at the AD level (Refer to Appendix A: Methods). Most of the participants reported directly to their dean or director or university librarian. One was serving in an interim dean role. Another participant was serving in an interim assistant dean role during the time of the interview.⁹⁵ In addition, I spoke with five library directors. These directors had been in their roles for less than two years and could speak to both their motivation for assuming this advanced role and their experience with transitioning into that position.⁹⁶ In each of the twenty-three interviews, there were four sections of questions which guided each session: personal narratives or stories of entry into a leadership or management position, career path, developing the next generation of library leaders, and future career aspirations. (Refer to Appendix B: Call for Participation and Interview Protocol.) After each session, I wrote a field memo to capture my observations of body language, session content, and initial connections among content shared across sessions. After I conducted the interviews, I transcribed them, conducted an open coding process, and developed themes grounded in participants' commonly expressed ideas and experiences. (Please refer to Appendix C: Code Trees.)

I conducted a frequency analysis based on eleven job ads that participants applied to and thirty-nine postings which academic libraries advertised during my six-month data gathering timespan. As Klaus Krippendorff describes in his 1980 book, a frequency analysis is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data and their context."⁹⁷ Summarizing George Gerbner's 1969 description of message systems, Krippendorff argues, frequency analyses enable a researcher to explore the components of systems, assign priorities to those components, determine the qualities associated with the components, and the "proximal or logical associations between the components."⁹⁸ Forming those relationships becomes the basis of conclusions drawn from my frequency analyses. One central limitation of this method becomes the inclination to form generalizations from the documents analyzed. To mitigate this limitation, I offer my conclusions drawn from the frequency analyses as a way to triangulate the ten big ideas I have developed from both the interviews and job descriptions.

The following chapters explore and analyze the themes found in each area of focus in the study. For readability, I have edited the quotes included throughout the book to ensure that the reader can focus on the content of each participant's story.⁹⁹ I have also edited the quotes to remove any identifiable information, including the names of individuals and specific universities and colleges. Sprinkled throughout the book are sidebars with reflections from current library deans. Through these stories told by Kate, Debbie, Sarah, and Tom, we can construct an understanding of how administrators perceive issues of leadership and management development.

Limitations

There are two main limitations of my research that impact the generalizability of my results and recommendations. The total sample of twenty-two senior leaders whose responses I

have included in this book represents but a fraction of all administrators at the assistant or associate dean level. The sample I drew from self-identified an interest in leadership and management, which led them to respond to my call for participation. It is likely that the participants already think and reflect about the topics we explored during the interview, and so their responses may not represent the broader practices in the library profession related to developing the next generation of library leaders. Second, the method of open coding interview transcriptions is inherently a subjective process. While the method encourages approaching the data without preconceived notions, that standard is challenging to maintain when conducting the data analysis. To mediate that potential bias, I worked with several colleagues to review my analysis in earlier drafts of the book to determine if the data I presented supported my observations and conclusions.

Personal Narrative

"I started at the University Health Sciences Library and Center. A large part of my role was being the webmaster. That is an amazing position in the library because you don't have any direct reports, but you have to influence every single aspect of the library, how it's communicated, how it's visualized. On the one hand, you learn everything, which is great. I've had conversations with archivists that I wouldn't have normally had in a daily setting. That was my first soft management role, or leadership role in the sense of getting everybody together and doing a web redesign. And, actually, I've done a number of those in my career, and I find working with the web is extraordinarily challenging, but a rewarding way to get everybody together and on the same page. I didn't supervise anybody, but it was my first leadership area where I influenced others."

Stories of first leadership experiences range from those practitioners who actively pursue increased responsibilities to those who felt they had no choice but to step up into a more senior role. As the story above illustrates, most administrators looking back on their first leadership experience found tremendous satisfaction in their work and the impact they had on their users, systems, or the organization. They used phrases including, "You learn everything, which is great." Administrators spoke of their cross-departmental work, which was a critical component in these first experiences. They describe the "rewarding way to get everybody together and on the same page." Early leadership experiences are often collaborative in nature, which can be a departure from day-to-day work as librarians.

Leadership

STEPPING UP

When thinking about their first leadership experience, administrators spoke of taking initiative or "stepping up" when presented with an opportunity to lead or when recognizing they could solve a particular problem. Remembering her time working in a library during graduate school, and speaking confidently, Kate shared, "They needed someone to cover at the reference desk. So, I stepped up and said, 'Oh, I can do that. I've had some training.' That was the first time where I really said I think I can do something that's outside of my job description." Finding a new challenge beyond their position description is a primary motivator for practitioners. Kate's characterization of taking on additional responsibility speaks to the interest many participants had to challenge themselves beyond the role they were hired for. Those new responsibilities led Kate to feel a certain amount of freedom and

flexibility to try new things. She reflected that she had “a larger purview of responsibilities for moving things forward and trying out new stuff. I got a lot of experience in that role because I had a lot of flexibility.” Often, these first leadership experiences were short-term responsibilities with a defined deliverable.

Developing a leadership career pathway with opportunities to experience small wins or successes builds confidence and encourages deeper engagement with leadership work. Kate’s reference training led to her feeling confident to step up and staff the desk, which served as a stepping-stone in her career. These first steps along a career path toward increasing responsibility in leadership and management roles enable practitioners to develop confidence in their leadership potential and skills early on in their careers. Building on the confidence emerging leaders feel early in their careers, administrators can best foster the development of leadership skills and capacity. Low-stakes leadership roles provide emerging leaders the support and flexibility to experiment, fail, and re-tool without major consequences. Leading a project within a librarian’s domain expertise gives emerging leaders feelings of empowerment and success, critical components when developing a leadership pipeline for practitioners.

Similar to the empowerment emerging leaders feel during their first leadership experiences, the freedom to try new things while managing projects become important to participants. Several elements for success when working on these projects included having a direct line of support from a supervisor or coach, the resources needed to complete the work, a clear understanding of how the project fit within the library’s priorities, a communications plan, and engaged stakeholders. Not a recipe by any means, these components provide the structures necessary for emerging leaders to feel successful and complete their work. When providing training supervisors and coaches should describe the soft skills and work required of the library leader. Understanding the available support and expectations builds confidence and feelings of empowerment.

When thinking about an online learning portal she helped to create, Kate shared: “I was the one who was responsible to the director and for the budget and everything else we associated with it.” With this experience, Kate had clear expectations from her supervisor and financial boundaries for the project. Beyond those constraints, Kate remembered feeling “very free to try new things” with an understanding of “what the important initiatives for the library were and communicate that to someone who did not have that same point of view on things but had a lot of energy and initiative to try new stuff.” Kate clearly felt the responsibility of ensuring the success of the online learning portal. However, by giving emerging leaders control over both the ultimate product and the process, they feel the freedom to be creative and innovative.

Collaborative project teams provide support and encouragement in these early leadership experiences. Kate frequently used the word “we” when describing the steps involved in setting up a student learning space. Participants described how their first leadership experience elevated them above their previous roles as collaborators. Kate explained, “That project was definitely my first experience moving up a notch from being a collaborator and a contributor to being a manager.” Her reflection speaks to the hierarchical aspects that some ascribe to leadership roles. Librarians may feel more like leaders as they advance into more senior roles, while others feel empowered leading initiatives early on in their careers

without those experiences tied to positional management responsibilities. Such a difference speaks to how administrators model leadership and describe leadership opportunities.

Developing a career ladder for professionals to gain leadership and management skills best meets the needs of our field by acknowledging and accommodating these two different modes of leadership. To successfully implement such pathways into leadership, the profession must offer models of both hierarchical and non-hierarchical leadership to enable librarians to see themselves in these other roles. Such support would foster a profession where a variety of pathways are encouraged and supported. When participants felt they had been nurtured and trained by supervisors or colleagues, they seemed much more interested in pursuing leadership opportunities as they came up.

TRANSFORMATION

When reflecting on early leadership experiences, emerging leaders remember the transformational aspects of their work—both on their own development and the impact their work had on the organization and its users. For a number of participants, their early leadership skill development dovetailed with learning library skills related to a particular area of librarianship. Remembering one of her early supervisors, Debbie fondly recalled, “I was given much more of a responsibility than typing card catalog cards. I learned how to place orders, to talk with vendors, how to do binding, and to do large shifts with the collection. I started to learn cataloging rules, while still as a paraprofessional.” Debbie developed leadership skills and domain-based skills in tandem. Unlike the identity shift that takes place as leaders continue to advance, they experience a balance between such opportunities and their library work in these early experiences. There is very little difference between their roles as leaders or managers and their positions as practitioners. Such a shift in their identity and their sense of themselves as librarians comes later in their careers.

A supportive network helps emerging leaders navigate their changing library roles. Emerging leaders cannot rely solely on their supervisors or administrators to provide support. Rather, they should actively develop a professional network, including practitioners and leaders outside of their organizations. Debbie described the impact her supervisor and mentor had on her development and outlook on libraries as someone who was “incredibly cutting-edge. And really wanted to allow people the freedom not to worry about making mistakes so they could be creative and bring ideas to the table. It was definitely not based on rank or in my case even experience. It was a very innovative culture.” The connections between early leadership opportunities and organizational culture is a critical link when considering how to foster leadership development. As Debbie states here, her supervisor gave her opportunities and served as a mentor, despite her paraprofessional role.

For librarians to navigate their development as emerging leaders, they need strong mentors and coaches to cheer them on and provide feedback and support. In Debbie’s experience, leadership meant the opportunity to develop her skills beyond the duties of her position, made possible by the mentoring she received. Debbie recalled, “With her mentoring, I was able to be successful.” Similar to the support Kate received through her previous training on the reference desk and the collaborative nature of the work she described, Debbie, too, underscored the important role that support systems, like mentors, can play in a librarian’s career early on. Establishing a broad network demystifies the role

of library leaders and provides a variety of leadership models for practitioners to inform their own development and style by expanding practitioners' perspectives on librarianship.

These relationships and broader organizational culture models prove transformative for emerging leaders, as together they foster an environment that celebrates innovation and creativity from all levels of the organization. This early experience had a lasting impact on Debbie as she progressed through her career. She shared: "Looking back . . . it set me up for interesting expectations when I moved on to other jobs because I thought that this was perhaps the benchmark. I now know in retrospect it's not." These comments speak to the critical role culture plays in framing a librarian's perceptions of what leadership and management responsibilities look like. Similar to the benefits establishing a network have on the profession as a way to clearly convey the role of leadership and management positions, it is also an organization's or profession's culture that provides opportunities to be creative and take on leadership roles. These non-hierarchical opportunities provide a window into the day-to-day work of administrators that emerging leaders find so useful early on in their careers.

Having the opportunity to lead change through one project or assignment enables emerging leaders to experience the power of how one librarian can positively impact organizational culture and bring about meaningful change to move the library forward. Emulating an innovative organizational culture as part of early leadership experiences includes contributing to broader transformation to improve the organization's cultural climate. For many participants, their early leadership experiences related to the old adage, "That's just how things are." While working at a private research institution, Debbie found the staff association was the only avenue through which the staff could communicate directly with the dean. Debbie remembered advocating on behalf of this group, which gave a voice to their concerns. To foster transparency around the labor-intensive work culture change demands, the profession must provide opportunities to discuss and build upon these initiatives. Demystifying leadership roles and responsibilities cannot be something left only up to senior administrators. Experiences like Debbie's provide useful strategies and reflections for other emerging leaders to draw upon. Developing opportunities for dialogs within and outside of a single organization best bring about a profession-wide culture of a shared understanding of leadership and management work. Positive leadership experiences encourage practitioners to consider formal leadership and management roles as they continued in their careers.

STRUCTURES

Developing strategies to work within or to disrupt the current organizational structure is another characteristic of early leadership experiences. Participants frequently commented on specific structures that both enhanced and hindered their early leadership experiences. They found themselves learning project management terminology to guide their work. Debbie described the language and process a new administrator brought to her work and the impact of that coaching: "She took one look at what I was doing and recognized it as a project. So, she brought all the tools and language and redefined how things were happening. . . . It took a good year for me to really understand that way of thinking." Similar to the terms

we learned when becoming librarians, participants described this second vocabulary they layered on top of their librarian-speak to manage projects.

To foster leadership in our libraries for those early in their careers, administrators must be open to non-hierarchical power structures to provide early career librarians opportunities to practice being leaders—while using their domain expertise—within the supportive environment of their organizations. Being the decision-maker and team leader were two critical components of practitioners' feeling empowered. Building on one's domain expertise was the most important ingredient for developing sources of empowerment. The balance between expertise and leadership responsibilities evolves over the course of one's career, leading to a change in perception of self as librarian and individual value within academic libraries.

Providing support for emerging leaders to recognize opportunities to grow their skill sets is a critical part of closing the leadership gap. Sarah's early leadership experience was rooted in her work as a web developer. Recalling a project to implement a new course management tool, Sarah shared, "The original plan had been to offer workshops, but I decided to take it to the extreme, and I met with every chair to explain the change and said, 'Where on the timeline would your department like to be?' I just really dove right in."

Not all librarians would be comfortable taking such a proactive approach when implementing a new initiative. Sarah's approach of diving right in reflects the enthusiastic attitude and eagerness to introduce change many participants brought to early leadership opportunities. Sarah went on to describe the decision-making process she undertook when considering how best to implement the course management tool. She remembered: "It was an opportunity that I felt I could take a gentle road or I could take a really extreme road with it and really forge it into a leadership opportunity for myself." The profession needs to provide support for all librarians and their particular work styles while striving to meet the needs of users. Some librarians, like Sarah, believe being successful means making a change or introducing something new, despite resistance or ambivalence of stakeholders. Other librarians would not feel comfortable implementing such a change without 100 percent buy-in and support from stakeholders. When developing career pathways for librarians, there should be support for these multiple work styles; recognizing different situations or organizational contexts requires different leadership approaches.

Existing structures can also have a negative impact on early leadership experiences. Unlike Kate, Debbie, and Sarah, Tom's early leadership experiences could be described as assuming a "fix it" role within the organization, with little coaching or mentoring to guide him. Tom often found himself placed in the middle of established organizational structures and norms and charged with bringing about change. As a graduate student and then as a paraprofessional staff member, he recalled, "I was working in government documents, and we were dismantling that service and integrating the functions into both public services and tech services. But the person I reported to really didn't like the project. I was kind of caught between her and her boss." When approaching institutional change, administrators need to be mindful of the limits of non-hierarchical leadership structures, particularly when working with early career librarians.

Navigating interpersonal conflicts, shifting a service model, and dispersing a collection require different leadership skills and, ideally, previous leadership experience. It would be challenging to feel confidence and empowered in the situation Tom found himself. Despite

these limitations, Tom remembered it being “a successful project. Because of budget cuts, they ended up in a resource situation where one of us was going to have to go—either me or my boss—and they persuaded her to retire. I was probably put in one of the worst situations to try to lead something like that.” When working with emerging leaders, confronted with interpersonal conflict, it is critically important to ensure negative experiences do not have a lasting impact on individual motivations to serve in leadership roles.

Administrators and librarians should encourage their early career colleagues to develop a network to help mitigate the inevitable challenges we all face during our careers. Establishing a network is a critical component of developing a career ladder for leadership. Drawing on the experiences of others, an emerging leader can learn about different organizational and leadership models, which puts her situation into a broader context. Although exact opposites (Tom believed in the dysfunctional organizational culture norms of academic libraries while Debbie held fast to the belief that all libraries were innovative and creative organizations), both norms became contrasted by later experiences. The broader a librarian’s network and the more engaged we are in professional organizations, the more we can challenge these norms and daily realism to foster leadership experience and bring about change.

Change within the broader organization—be it the library or the university—impact early leadership and management experiences. When asked to lead a team to consolidate the collections of eight branch libraries, Sarah described the process associated with this work and said, “We are having to make very rapid decisions. Though I have led projects before, certainly nothing at this scale.” In this experience, the time-bound nature of Sarah’s project led to feelings of pressure and low morale. Administrators should consider the impact these negative experiences will have on emerging leaders. Some emerging leaders will enjoy the challenge of bringing about new services strategies while others will not.

The profession must examine how negative experiences impact emerging leaders’ willingness to take on subsequent projects. Participants experienced personal growth as a result of both positive and negative experiences; however, the profession needs to provide support for the emotional work of leadership and management to avoid industry-wide burnout. To confront the reality of challenging leadership and management situations, administrators must be truthful about the work’s context and timing. Emerging leaders need to develop a strong and supportive network to remain connected and engaged during difficult experiences. Finally, administrators and the profession as a whole should consider how to incorporate pause points within a practitioner’s career to provide reflection and the best environment for first leadership experiences, especially when taking responsibility for contentious projects.

Supervisory Experience

PREPAREDNESS

Echoing the findings in Michael Rooney’s study, a number of participants commented on their lack of preparedness to step into supervisory roles. Previous management experience or training and the number of direct reports were two components related to one’s sense of preparedness. For Kate, the numbers of her direct reports colored her experience more than any support she did or did not receive as she advanced, her sense of herself, or institutional structures that impacted her management of others. Kate described her lack of preparedness

and reflected: “I had no formal training or experience in human resource management. That was a big leap for me.” Few participants spoke of informal or formal onboarding or orientation programs their libraries developed to prepare new supervisors. Individual libraries need to consider what kinds of programs make sense in their organizations. Working with their Human Resources department, whether on campus or in the library, to develop an onboarding program to set expectations and prepare new supervisors builds confidence and establishes expectations much in the same way such support structures enable new leaders to feel confident and empowered.

The interpersonal dynamics of supervising others also led participants to feel anxious. As the number of her direct reports grew from three to nineteen within five years, Kate experienced difficulties related to time management, resolving interpersonal conflicts, and facilitating her unit’s work, which all became compounded by the number of direct reports she worked with early on. To develop an emerging leader’s confidence with managing others, her supervisors, coaches, and administrators must consider how supervisory responsibilities fit within a broader career ladder of skill development and that individual’s career path.

Also, the impact of staff turnover on administrators greatly impacted their sense of themselves as managers. As someone who had moved for different jobs and was somewhat new to that region, Kate felt unprepared to manage those who “tend to stay here for their entire careers. . . . The likelihood that you would end up either being supervised or supervising a former colleague and friend is high.” A number of participants commented on the impact of the rate of turnover on their organization’s culture. For some, consistency in staffing greatly assisted new administrators, as they found themselves surrounded by gatekeepers of institutional knowledge. For others, like Kate, she found the lack of new staff more stifling as she entered into senior roles. Administrators and one’s network become vital lenses through which to understand the cultural context of an organization for a new supervisor. Working with the new manager to establish mechanisms and structures to bring about change is critical to ensuring success and building a new supervisor’s confidence. Teaching new supervisors to keep all staff engaged regardless of their tenure in the institution mitigates the impact of staff turnover while ensuring change can occur.

There is not one path that would meet the needs of all emerging leaders. Talking throughout a librarian’s career about where, when, or if to insert supervisory responsibilities is key to closing the leadership gap in the profession. The same support and structures participants experienced as informal leaders should be applied to the role of supervising others. Presenting positive models of leadership through one’s professional network or as part of professional development and engagement are key contributions the profession as a whole can make to individual leadership development.

SENSE OF ONESELF

For a new manager, the age and experience of those whom she supervises dramatically impacts an emerging leader’s sense of self. Debbie found herself fairly new in her career when she became a supervisor. Being younger than those whom she supervised, as she put it, “That’s really the thing that tests your mettle.” A number of participants commented about the impact of age on their early supervisory experiences. They referred to their own age and age of their employees. As someone in the final phase of her career, Debbie has

been able to reflect on the arc of her career and shared, “Part of the challenge for me at that time was I was still a new professional. I was only in my early thirties and I didn’t feel that much older than the younger professionals. But I had been around libraries and higher ed just long enough to know a little bit better.” Managing staff older than the supervisor is all but unavoidable, as librarians move through their career paths at different rates and arrive at different destinations—some within management and some not. Transparent practices to foster respect across organizational hierarchies facilitates these cross-generational dynamics. Supervisors and coaches in one’s network need to cherish the different approaches new managers bring to their work. Valuing new perspectives while respecting previous approaches to librarianship ensure that all staff feel supported and engaged. Regardless of a librarian’s position within the organizational hierarchy, everyone experiences changes to their role throughout their career.

In addition to the impact of age on one’s sense of self, the identity crisis librarians experience as they shift more into administrative roles is critical to understanding individual motivations for pursuing leadership and management roles. Debbie described the push and pull between leadership and management duties and domain-based aspects of librarianship. She experienced and observed the transition that happens as librarians shift “into the field from academic backgrounds like myself, being in more of a doer role where the assignment is really performing some technical function.” Characteristic of all participant experiences, their sense of themselves as librarians, the value they bring to libraries, and their initial motivations for doing the work changes over time.

At the beginning of their careers, librarians first make contributions as practitioners in specific areas—reference, cataloging, special collections, and acquisitions—which become the foundation of their job satisfaction and sense of value in their organizations. As middle managers, they draw less satisfaction from these functional contributions as they shift from purely librarian roles to having management responsibilities. As administrators, they spend far less time contributing directly to domain areas and, therefore, need to learn how to draw satisfaction and their sense of personal value from their roles as leaders and managers instead. No longer motivated solely by domain-based aspects of librarianship, administrators derive satisfaction from facilitating others’ work. Debbie remembered that in the next phase of her career she found herself moving away “from being a peer or a subordinate to . . . being a supervisor. That’s an important transition.” When coaching and preparing librarians to assume supervisory roles, identifying this transition point and discussing the impact on one’s sense of self as a librarian are critical steps to ensuring that a new supervisor feels supported and valued. These conversations should take place at natural pause points as a practitioner moves through her career and should be a part of any leadership and management skill development. Taking the time to discuss the impact of management on one’s role as a librarian demystifies the work of leaders and managers and presents a more realistic picture of what that work requires.

Evolving strategies to accomplish their work is another aspect of one’s changing role and identity as a supervisor. As Debbie pursued supervisory roles, she found the methods and strategies she used previously to manage her work were no longer sufficient when leading a team. She recalled, “All the things that don’t matter when you work independently. You know your system, but actually learning how that communication and process works.” Once Debbie became a supervisor, she could no longer rely only on herself to get work

done. Rather, she had to shift her thinking away from “I” to facilitate the work of her team. As supervisors transition into increasing managerial roles and away from library work, the more they must rely on teams and the expertise of others to accomplish tasks.

For those librarians who derive job satisfaction and motivation from their personal accomplishments rooted in their domain expertise, these transitions are challenging. Debbie described how her perception of herself changed over time. Debbie wistfully said, “I’ve been in this position a number of years and had people under me who have left to do other things. All of a sudden you become the old person. I don’t get to do those things that I used to like to do when I first started in the profession. But I have these other responsibilities now and I need to understand my own limitations.” For those who struggle with separating themselves from the functional work of libraries, administrators should consider how a flexible portfolio—with time built in for specific tasks related to their original area of expertise—would best serve the manager, foster a positive sense of self, and best serve the organization.

SUPPORT

Participants spoke of the impact that the support they received from their supervisors, peers, or direct reports had on them in their first supervisory positions. Sarah described the formal coaching and support she received early on, which took place through conversations about management styles and techniques. Sarah remembered, “I had good support. The woman who was previously managing was still on the faculty.” For Sarah, having her predecessor nearby as a resource proved important as she entered into a supervisor role.

Sarah’s supervisor developed a career ladder for her so that the process of gaining more responsibility happened gradually. Her predecessor “was looking to share the load and was eyeing retirement. She started distributing some of her tasks to the more junior faculty.” Her supervisor’s succession planning approach enabled Sarah to gain supervisory experience without the high stakes of working independently. This alternative leadership model in which Sarah had access to her predecessor and the gradual transition of duties proved to be a supportive environment for Sarah. When thinking about her experience, she said, “Any time I had a question or problem, I could just poke my head in her office and say, ‘How would you handle this?’” Creating supervisory opportunities for practitioners enables them to see themselves a managerial role, which helps to demystify managers’ daily work.

Such opportunities also enable practitioners to take advantage of the in-house knowledge and expertise of other managers. Sarah received practical advice and coaching from her supervisor. She felt, “I really expanded my tool kit as a manager based on good feedback that I received from her.” The on-the-job coaching Sarah received proved formative for many participants. Once an emerging leader becomes a supervisor, the stakes for success become higher than when working as someone with non-positional authority leading an initiative. However, having a trusted colleague nearby proved invaluable to their sense of success. Colleagues in professional organizations or networks external to one’s organization provide a similar support structure. Seeking external support through a formal program with a nearby library or a regional association are two possible approaches.

Having “go to” people outside of one’s organization also disrupts the politics inherent in any organization. Providing support for practitioners who transition from peer to a

supervisor role is critical to ensuring the success of that role change. Sarah commented on the downside of moving into a supervisory role while being coached by a current staff member. Unlike other new managers, her close relationship with her predecessor made it more challenging to start her position with a clean slate. Sarah remembered, “Now that I was rising up above the rank and file of it, I was starting to get exposed to a little bit more of a politics of the workplace.” As supervisors, librarians become aware of the broader organizational culture, which naturally includes interpersonal conflicts and associated challenges. Shifting away from being purely a practitioner to one with managerial responsibilities compels leaders to become decision-makers, which surface interpersonal conflict and draw attention to organizational culture norms.

STRUCTURES

New supervisors encounter several structures which impact their experiences: administrative, organization culture, and human resources constraints. In an organization where best practices had not previously been valued, Tom’s experience led him to understand that having supervisory responsibilities compelled him to be the person “who has the power to say no.” This role shift challenges practitioners to reconsider their positions and identities as librarians. Similar to their early, non-positional authority roles, once they assumed supervisory responsibilities, most of which became permanent changes to their portfolio, their value to the organization and profession became one associated with facilitating work *and* being domain experts. Many participants found that that role created friction, particularly in departments where they had previously been peers with their colleagues and later became supervisors.

As academic libraries consider how to develop the next generation of leaders, administrators should consider the positive and negative impact of internal hiring when filling leadership and management vacancies. Tom’s experience emphasized that as a newcomer to an organization, he lacked the political capital to enact the changes his administrator charged him to make. Earning trust and political capital over time, external candidates become powerful change agents, as they bring a fresh perspective to their library, which enables them to identify necessary changes. Regardless of their path to supervisory positions, administrators should provide clear expectations of what such roles entail, making expectations clear to both the manager and colleagues.

Those expectations include overseeing performance evaluations, time sheets, approving vacation time, and being a general advocate for their direct reports. Tom explained, “I had to set workloads and priorities, do evaluations of them, and be there to help them with anything that they had questions on, and to keep the unit running.” Unlike Kate’s, Sarah’s, or Debbie’s experiences, Tom’s first role as a supervisor was a more traditional manager role, with little self-reflection or support. Feeling as though he had to have all of the answers is characteristic of many first-time supervisors. As practitioners who drew on their expertise and training in a particular functional area, librarians can be relied on to seek the relevant information in response to their users. As a supervisor, this identity shifts away from functional expert to facilitator. To avoid burnout, administrators must demystify the daily work of managers to encourage first-time supervisors to work with their teams to find solutions,

rather than provide all of the answers. Learning to work with others to facilitate their performance involves developing a set of soft skills.

Implementing human resource policies requires additional skills and strategies. Tom described one of his early experiences managing student employees. Learning the processes for payroll and policies around financial aid enable supervisors to be better advocates of their student employees. As they progress in their careers, librarians can then apply those advocacy skills and understanding of human resource policies to their faculty and staff direct reports. Tom remembered as a unit manager the importance of understanding the constraints placed on faculty or staff based on their union status. He found “there were lots of rules. What could and couldn’t be done.” Understanding administrative structures, organizational culture, and human resource policies train supervisors how best to work within existing systems to accomplish their work and facilitate the work of their employees. Providing clear expectations and support for new supervisors through these established structures enable managers to more fully understand their roles within the library.



Developing confidence and feeling empowered during early leadership experiences, and through their work as supervisors, foster emerging leaders’ interests in further developing their skills and seeking opportunities. Their own supervisors and administrators provide positive and negative leadership models, which inform how emerging leaders develop their own styles. For a number of participants, their career path toward leadership began as interns or while in graduate school, and for others, the shift took place further along in their careers. Their age and training informed their leadership trajectory. To develop a leadership pipeline, individual libraries must evaluate their own training practices and the formal and informal opportunities they provide staff to engage in leadership and management activities. Tailoring those opportunities to meet the individual needs and interests of librarians fosters a profession-wide culture of leadership and management development, which will help to close the current gap.

Skill Development

“We do the management course in library school, and I really didn’t glean anything from that that I thought I would ever use. Generally, I thought there was some magic sauce around managing a person and the performance side of things. I did think there was something there that I needed to know about managing other people and the sort of persona that a manager must be and distance that a manager must have. I didn’t think that I had those skills.”

Professional organizations and individual academic library administrators must encourage librarians to assess their leadership and management skills, identify areas to develop, and provide opportunities for gaining those skills, as part of building a career ladder. As participants identified and then gained necessary skills, their identities as librarians shifted away from purely that of practitioner to identifying more as leaders and managers. Administrators and managers should coach new leaders to recognize the change in their roles to mitigate the identity crisis participants underscored. Working with new library leaders and managers to see their roles as valuable to the organization and the profession is a critical piece needed to develop a leadership career pipeline.

Anticipated Skills

SELF-MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Being able to successfully manage oneself is a critical component of leadership and management development. Many of the participants talked about needing skills related to delegating, time management, and budgeting processes. Learning how to delegate and then delegating to others is a critical juncture in a career path. No longer solely responsible for completing a set of specific domain-based related tasks, participants in leadership and management roles experience a shift in their own identity as librarians. Developing the skills related to delegating, time management, and budgeting enabled them to more successfully facilitate others’ work.

Kate remembered learning to delegate and said, “I discovered along the way there’s a piece of this I could hand off. It’s contained. You can assess it. And you can see how much time it’s going to take.” Building on her skills when leading projects and library experience as a newer professional, Kate identified the parts of tasks she could delegate as she began to conceive of projects as having a beginning, middle, and an end, as earlier supervisors and coaches had modeled for her. For Kate, learning how to delegate to others was an important part of her entry into formal leadership and management roles. When library leaders

break down a process into different parts, it enables them to take advantage of their team's expertise and build organizational capacity.

Learning time management skills exposes the identity shift library leaders experience as they advance away from purely a practitioner role. In order to efficiently and effectively facilitate others' work, as well as her own, Kate reflected, "I underestimated how much I would need in terms of time management" when considering what skills she needed to be successful in her new role. Similar to the feelings that Debbie expressed when considering her changing perceptions of herself as a librarian, as Kate advanced into more senior roles, she remembered thinking, "I don't feel like a librarian anymore. All of those library skills I did not need and I don't need. It's a very different sort of role." In Kate's experience, the more she focused on managing herself, which enabled her to successfully manage others, she found herself feeling less like a librarian. When developing a career pipeline for librarians, the profession must consider the impact this identity crisis has on an individual's motivations for pursuing advanced positions. Library administrators are in the position to develop portfolios that include flexible responsibilities to enable a library leader to still "feel like a librarian."

Part of a leadership career ladder should include building skills, like budgeting, to enable potential library leaders to understand the processes behind managing funds. Developing budget management experience was the third skill participants identified. Kate remembered, "Getting up to speed with budgeting, I had never seen an entire library budget with your operations and your acquisitions." Understanding how each part of the budget fit together to form a holistic strategy to guide the library was new to Kate. Developing a scaffold approach to provide librarians with budgeting skills could include overseeing a grant project, an acquisition fund, or an event. As best as administrators can, while adhering to institutional policies, the management of budgets should be made transparent to foster a holistic understanding of the process and to ensure emerging leaders develop budget management skills.

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

In addition to learning skills to manage themselves and general operations, library leaders need skills related to managing and leading others. Debbie confessed, "Generally, I thought there was some magic sauce around managing a person and the performance side of things." Debbie's statement speaks to the kind of mystery surrounding leadership and management skills and roles in academic libraries. A number of participants shared their preconceived ideas of what leadership and management roles entailed before they entered advanced positions. These misperceptions impact administrators' ability to manage others. Experienced library leaders serve as models to demystify the aspects of management few see firsthand, such as performance reviews. While the specifics of an individual's performance review remain confidential, as part of developing a leadership career ladder, administrators should provide opportunities to learn the skills needed to manage those conversations.

Emblematic of their role shift from purely a practitioner to library leader, the flow of information and transparency become incredibly important aspects of managing others. When describing the nature of "people management" Debbie shared, "So there's the people management part, and some of that is day to day, how you have conversations with people,

how you have meetings with people in groups or separately, and how you keep the communication flowing through the department.” Facilitating the flow of information, who to share information with and when are critical skills library leaders need in order to be successful. Debbie explained the impact of developing those communication skills: “It all helps to build community, build understanding, and predictability.” A number of participants considered transparency and clear communication to be vital skills needed early on in their careers as they advanced into leadership and management roles. The amount of information one receives continues to shift over time, often with those in hierarchical positions of authority knowing the most. Coaching new library leaders around communication strategies would close this skill gap.

The misperceptions librarians have about leadership and management roles impact their skill acquisition and ability to identify necessary skills before entering into advanced positions. A number of participants described the skills they had anticipated and had not developed by the time they entered into their first leadership and management roles with regret and concern. Sarah shared, “I could have used some strategic planning experience. Didn’t get that.” Similar to the lack of transparency around performance reviews, library administrators need to develop inclusive processes to guide strategic planning—a skill, as the literature indicates—now expected of all library leaders. Providing opportunities for practitioners and middle managers to lead aspects of such planning would provide these librarians with a set of skills they could build upon as they continued in their career path, regardless of their library position.

In addition to specific leadership and management skills, like strategic planning, Sarah also described the beginning of a split that she felt between the skills she had needed up to that point in her career and those that she would need to be successful when managing others. Sarah explained, “I felt very comfortable with the technical aspects of the job. I felt that at that point I would consider myself a web services librarian.” Adding supervisory responsibilities becomes the signal to librarians that their roles have shifted into management, which impacts their self-perception as practitioners. Supporting both the new supervisor and the staff through clear expectations and honest conversations about the realities of those leadership roles would ease this transition.

Age differences between supervisor and supervisee is another aspect of the identity crisis. Sarah shared, “The supervising of others, my greatest concern at that point was that I was in my mid-twenties and everyone was significantly older than me, and I knew that that was going to be a challenge for myself.” Echoing Debbie’s perceptions of herself as a new supervisor, Sarah also felt uneasy about the age difference between herself and her reports. The unease stemmed from potential interpersonal conflicts and not related to the functional skills of librarianship, which, as Sarah shared, she felt quite comfortable with at that point in her career. The identity split or changing images of self-perception and personal value in libraries marked the careers of each participant. While nearly all found value in their roles as administrators, their shift into those positions emphasized the focus on soft or interpersonal skills needed to lead and manage others as opposed to domain-based expertise needed earlier in their careers.

EXTERNAL FORCES

Navigating the impact of external forces that require human resources-related skill development concerns emerging leaders. Tom talked specifically about understanding institutional policies beyond employee classifications. He remembered, “Any time I’m in a leadership role, I really get to know the policies well. That feels like part of the responsibility is to enact the policies.” Most, if not all, academic libraries provide training on HR policies. Establishing a network with others working in similarly governed organizations provides new managers with support to learn about the impact of policies on daily work practices. Such a network would also demystify the leadership skills needed to best manage HR policies. Understanding different faculty or staff classifications and related policies enables library leaders to best advocate for resources, develop efficient and effective workflows, support all library staff, and help to ensure job satisfaction and longevity.

Conceiving and writing job ads and position descriptions are the second component of human resource skills. As Tom entered into formal leadership and management roles, he began to develop skills related to “understanding how jobs are shaped, how job descriptions are built, and how units are organized.” Tom found the relationship between job descriptions and unit structures then impacted how he understood performance evaluations. Tom remembered, “You start to develop the skill set and the knowledge base that’s tied to: How do you evaluate people and supervise them on a day-to-day basis? How do you link those two? How does all that link back to day-to-day conversations and goal setting?” Similar to Debbie’s experience anticipating the importance of communication skills, Tom saw the connections between daily interactions and relationship building. Offering training around writing job ads and position descriptions encourages library leaders to consider different ways of expressing their department or organization’s needs and to convey the organizational culture to potential applicants.

A third component of human resource skills is an understanding of organizational culture and how each unit and individual contributes to the library’s priorities. Changes to organizational culture and structures provide library administrators with an opportunity to talk with new or potential library leaders about their career trajectory and interest in advanced responsibilities. In addition to human resource skills, participants considered an understanding of organizational culture and structure as necessary skills to develop. Tom shared his experience serving as a point person to the libraries’ facilities staff as a result of a reorganization of the library, which was “a new learning curve for me.” As his role evolved, Tom found that he needed to consider how his position and unit fit into the broader organizational structure. Prior to these changes, Tom found that he had been “implementing a program in isolation, and had I been better integrated into the leadership team or better felt that these efforts were being integrated into the larger institutional priorities, it would have gone more smoothly.” Developing an understanding of organizational culture and structures proved a critical skill set as librarians advanced in their careers past first leadership and management positions.

Each person experiences the impact of organizational culture and structures differently. For some, like Tom, the reorganization of his library led to solutions for developing holistic workflows, which enabled him to gain leadership and management skills as his role changed. A career ladder should include tangible approaches for identifying gaps in one’s

understanding of organizational culture and structures and opportunities to develop those skills in order for that person to be an effective leader and have the ability to advocate for herself and others, as well as make positive change within the library.

Skills Needed as Advanced in Career

UNDERSTANDING OF LIBRARY FUNCTIONS MORE BROADLY

As library leaders advance in their careers and enter into more senior leadership and management roles, most find they need to develop a broader understanding of library work outside of their original area of expertise.

For all participants, there were feelings of anxiety and an awareness of their gaps in functional areas of librarianship beyond their initial training. Speaking more generally about her career and observations about the profession, Kate reflected, “Inevitably, your portfolio broadens and gets shallower. There was always going to be some area of responsibility that I just didn’t have the strength in.” Similar to the leadership and management skills administrators scaffold throughout their careers, getting a broader understanding of librarianship should also be included in their skill development.

Many participants acknowledged that learning about a range of library domains served them well as they advanced in their careers. Frequently used words in the assistant dean job ads participants responded to included “experience,” “technology,” “services,” and “development.” Learning more about different areas of librarianship enables leaders to make connections across departments in their portfolios, better advocate for resources, and participate in holistic decision-making.

Working as an administrator enables librarians not to do the work themselves but rather to facilitate others’ work and provide them with support. In Kate’s experience, the dividing line between doing the stuff of librarianship and providing structures and support so others can do their work was a turning point in her career. As Kate moved from a department head role to her current assistant dean position, she recalled, “When you get into more senior positions, it really is not about what you do anymore. It’s really about facilitating what other people are doing.” Being able to separate oneself from doing the work to ensuring the work gets done is a key aspect of leadership development, regardless of the size or structure of the academic library.

The transition from librarian to library administrator requires reframing a library leader’s idea of what her accomplishments might look like and the skills needed to reach those goals.

“The need to be a general contractor. You have to be able to find ways to fix all the problems, whether it’s delegating or it’s working with people or taking care of it yourself. There’s a certain amount of good leadership when you’re willing to do everything and you can find answers to everything. Trying to find a way where you don’t burn out. That’s something that I struggle with now as a dean. Learning how to say no sometimes is the key thing.”

—Keith, library dean

Most librarians enter the field because of a passion for librarianship. For those who decide to advance into more senior roles, their accomplishments begin to look different as they become facilitators of library work. Kate shared, “That’s challenging for people who get into these roles because of what they do and their list of accomplishments. I wish I would have understood that better as a middle manager because I could have had a better impact.” Rather than lead the development of a new service, the manager instead is responsible for the ultimate success of that implementation. As a middle manager, Kate realized “I was trying to make sure my department got its work done, but if I had that bigger perspective, I could have elevated people in a way that would have been more meaningful.” As Kate advanced, she began to see how her unit’s work contributed to the larger goals and work of the organization. Facilitating work outside of one’s domain of expertise leads to opportunities to consider how best to provide tools and strategies for others to be successful. Facilitating work also enables leaders to begin encouraging others to take on leadership responsibilities based on their functional expertise. Being in a position to provide leadership opportunities for others marks a significant shift in a library leader’s career path and further impacts their identities as a librarian.

To prepare librarians for entering into senior management roles, the profession should consider how to assist practitioners with that necessary transition and changing sense of personal value and contribution to their organization and the field. The narrative section of participants’ job postings reflects this need. Some of the most frequently used words were “planning,” “management,” “community,” and “campus.”

These terms indicate a strong desire for candidates who have the skills to marshal resources to move the organization forward and have a positive impact on their universities. As the leadership literature suggests, developing an understanding of the higher education landscape is critical as librarians consider how to meet the needs of their users from a holistic standpoint and, not as Kate found, purely from a departmental level. Having a holistic understanding of academic library work is a critical step in a library leader’s career development.

HARD SKILLS

As library leaders move further away from the daily application of their domain-based expertise, they need new hard and soft skills to be successful in their more advanced roles. Drawing on data from their job descriptions, some of the most commonly used words describing required skills included “assessment,” “evidence,” “supervising,” and “business.”

These terms indicate a preference for candidates with managerial skills to guide their own work and to facilitate the work of others. When referring to hard skills, participants talked about time management, the need to delegate, and budget management. These hard skills were similar to the skills needed earlier in their careers, but once they became administrators, those skills became even more critical as their responsibilities grew.

Administrators experience a shift away from specific library-related tasks, such as cataloging or answering reference questions, and instead spend the majority of their time working with and on behalf of people to further the organization’s goals. Despite having a skill set such as the one described in their job ads and percentages of time allotted to specific tasks, as Debbie commented, when you move into more senior-level positions, “your time

is not your own.” In Debbie’s experience, her priorities came from providing support to her employees. She explained, “I have given up scheduling. I used to say today I will work on this and then I will do this, and I’ve given up. I have meetings with other people and those are the only *set* things in my calendar because I just don’t know what else is going to happen.” Senior library administrators need to carefully consider the composition of their managers’ portfolios to help avoid burnout and decreasing motivation and overall sense of job satisfaction. When thinking about the most stressful times she’s experienced in her role, Debbie shared, “You start feeling like you’re spinning plates. You kind of have one going and then one starts slowing down, but you go back over there and you keep it going.” For those who feel less connected to their administrative duties than their work as library practitioners, developing flexible time within the work week for a special project or a domain-based library task will keep those managers engaged.

To avoid an industry-wide burnout or administrators leaving senior leadership roles because of significant time pressures, library administrators must establish clear institutional priorities and foster strong, supportive senior leadership teams. The increasing pace of work requires library leaders to lean on specific skills at certain times. Debbie has found “the skills that are important to me *now* are maybe still rooted in the ones that were important at the beginning. But I think making those connections, keeping your priorities front and center because it’s so easy to get so distracted and sometimes demoralized because there are just things that happen that you have to deal with.” Similar to the time management skills new managers need, as library leaders advance, their time becomes even more precious as competing priorities increase. As Debbie said, “I’ve gotten really good at doing a lot of work in a *little* amount of time. Really needing to learn how to prioritize.” Debbie distinguished between being organized and managing her time effectively. In her experience, successful time management stems from setting priorities. She shared, “I’m still learning. I’m still getting used to that idea.” Administrators should seek out and offer support for meaningful reflection about leaders’ job duties and how they spend their time to be most productive. In turn, administrators need to be transparent with colleagues and direct reports as a way to demystify the daily realities of leadership and management work.

Delegating to staff enables library leaders to depend on the expertise of their employees, rather than feel as though they should provide all of the answers themselves. Like time management, administrators often struggle to delegate. As Debbie advanced in her career, she transitioned from a focus on developing “expertise and knowledge. I felt I was ready to delegate the deep knowledge of cataloging and acquisition techniques to others.” In that context, Debbie found her role shifting to one who “helped the department achieve the goals that the dean set out for us.” Debbie shared, “I’m not used to delegating at all, and so training myself to do that, to look for opportunities where I really don’t need to do this myself, I can give it to somebody else. In fact, I should give it to somebody else. That was probably one of the hardest things to learn.” Similar to the early leadership and management experience administrators have, so too must they work to provide such opportunities for their own staffs. This work first requires administrators to identify parts of projects or tasks that can be reasonably delegated, provide training where needed to help ensure success, and then provide support for those taking on such leadership and management responsibilities.

Collaboration is a by-product of delegating, which breaks down silos. As she’s learned how to delegate, Debbie made connections across library departments and encouraged

librarians to work together. Only by establishing those connections has Debbie been able to help break down silos in her organization. She works with “folks to understand how to interact with people with different skill sets and work across departmental lines or outside of their comfort zones.” Similar to the big-picture thinking Kate commented on during this phase of her career, Debbie remembered, “I felt that it was very important for me to really, deeply understand the trends in that work, and developing the skill set of the people who reported to me, and then building relationships across the system.” Establishing clear communication, training, expectations, and support for the departments in an administrator’s portfolio helps to ensure success as library leaders advance into more senior roles with greater and more varied responsibilities.

Budgeting is a third critical skill necessary to be an effective senior administrator, as it enables them to strategically advocate for their unit and their organization. Sarah found that once she strengthened her budgeting skills, she was “surprised how far just a little bit of math takes you and the way that accounting works in the educational environment.” No longer applied only to a single unit, understanding the budget process enables administrators to best advocate for the library within the broader university budget system. Similar to the experiences participants had with project and budget management earlier on in their careers, Sarah developed strategies to understand how the budget and allocation process worked in higher education, which made her feel like a more effective and impactful leader. Sarah began thinking of “the budget as a tool, not as a transaction. You’ve got the chunk that goes to all the personnel costs, you’ve got the chunk that goes to all of the collections costs, and then you have very little left over for everything else.” Given the challenging financial landscape of higher education, developing a broad understanding of the budget process to meet our users’ needs continues to be critical. Having a holistic approach to budget advocacy and management enables senior leaders to best communicate with stakeholders and to develop and assess strategies.

SOFT SKILLS

Drawing from the preferred skills section of the job ads participants responded to, desired soft skills included “develop,” instructional,” “management,” and “design” indicating a preference for candidates who can think holistically about library management and working with others to provide needed services.

Almost all of the participants spoke of developing interpersonal skills and how that skill set became more and more important as they advanced. Interpersonal skills included communication styles, negotiating, fostering connections, and balancing the emotional load of leadership and management work. Tom shared, “I realized that I needed to learn communication styles and working with different people coming from different age groups, different ethnic groups. There wasn’t just a single way of interacting with the people who reported to me.” There are no short cuts to applying leadership and management skills. Each person within a unit or an administrator’s portfolio may require a different communication style, methods of motivation, and structures of support.

Developing a communication style requires evaluating what communication tool to use in a given situation, advocating up, and listening to those with and without positional authority. As he advanced, Tom continued to think about “communication skills in the

broadest sense, including when to apply them and what is not appropriate.” Strong communication should be a combination of the correct tool to carry the correct message. He described the process of learning what tool to use and for what purpose. For example, Tom said, “A performance issue is not something that goes in an email. Learning those rhythms of the medium for your message I think is the cornerstone of it all for me.” Developing an effective communication style also enhanced his ability to advocate for his employees and their work. Tom remembered, “I was in a situation where I learned a lot about managing up, with my own supervisor and relationship building across departments.” Effective library leaders need to be able to communicate based on how their stakeholders prefer to receive information. In Tom’s experience, strong communication skills made him both an effective leader and manager of his own unit, as well as a successful member of the library’s leadership team. Senior administrators should offer models for communicating that they value all employees as a way of demystifying leadership and management work.

Equally important when considering the most effective communication tool to use was the importance of active listening, “I needed to learn to listen and not interrupt people when they’re telling their stories.” When trying to implement change or respond to the frenetic work pace of a university, it is all too easy not to take the time to learn from others or listen to an alternative perspective. Library leaders need to manage themselves and others to set aside such time to foster supportive organizational cultures.

Negotiating with employees, administrators, and external stakeholders is a second interpersonal skill required of senior leaders. Tom described negotiating: “It’s not like you’re sitting at a table and it’s Camp David, but it can happen every day.” These daily negotiations include discussions of available financial and human resources as well as institutional support. For many library leaders, such negotiations began with their administrators and understanding their intentions and vision. Tom remembers thinking, “The whole idea of speaking truth to power wasn’t particularly helpful in working with administrators. It was more about problem-solving.” Tom found himself negotiating in different ways to produce the best results and meet the goals and needs of the organization. He referred to “implementing systems, producing big projects, events, and fundraising.” Each of those areas requires strong interpersonal skills to ensure each stakeholder’s needs were met. The ability to successfully negotiate builds on a senior library administrator’s communication skills and ability to foster connections between people and departments.

Making connections is the third interpersonal skill critically important for senior leaders. More important than merely making connections for oneself is the skill of making connections to advocate for your co-workers and employees. As Tom articulated, “That’s what we do, right? It’s part of our DNA as librarians. We make those connections for people.” In order to successfully solve institutional problems and bring about change, Tom had to learn how to encourage collaboration. Fostering connections between people and projects is one way senior leaders can stay connected to the functional work of librarianship, as establishing those relationships requires an understanding and awareness of current opportunities. Such work can be incredibly rewarding. Tom recalled, “I had underestimated pulling people together. When you look at successful deans and vice provosts, it’s those soft skills of making connections.” In Tom’s experience, having that skill already had an impact on his ability to make those connections as he moved into library administration. Tom explained, “The way it translates as you move up the hierarchy is then you’re making connections among people

and projects, and thinking about how do you bring people together?” These connections did not always lead to successful outcomes, which can be a source of worry for newer administrators. Tom shared, “I used to worry, and I still do to some extent. It’s like having the dinner party that is an epic fail or something. You invite all these people over to your house and then they don’t have a good time. There’s always this fear that you’re responsible for having everybody get along.” Despite that potential negative outcome, developing that skill of being a connector increased the number of potentially successful partnerships. In Tom’s experience, “if you can make connections between people, that’s just crucial.”

Navigating the emotional load of being a senior administrator, which manifests itself when providing meaningful feedback throughout the year and during the performance evaluation process is a fourth skill senior administrators need to continue to develop as they advance. Despite conducting evaluations while working as department or unit heads, once library leaders entered more advanced positions they felt “there’s a piece of it that’s a little bit on the other side of the curtain. You don’t really know how that stuff works.” As an employee, participants had been a part of performance evaluations. However, they made a distinction between that previous experience, and as Sarah described, “I had no idea how emotionally draining a performance appraisal is. From this perspective of giving people their appraisal, I remember being nervous myself” when being evaluated. She had not thought about the other side of giving the feedback. In Sarah’s experience, she found that certain processes which previously felt natural or lower stress suddenly became high stakes and worrisome as she became an administrator. She commented, “We take it for granted as all very simple, and none of it’s simple, you know? None of it’s easy.” Library leaders must model and provide coaching, offer feedback, and give productive performance review training to emerging leaders to address this skill gap and related anxiety.

Power dynamics also heavily impact library leaders’ sense of themselves as managers. During performance evaluations, Sarah found herself “being conscious of inhabiting a position of power that is unrelated to my person. There’s a piece of me that exists here that has nothing to do with who I am and everything to do with the role that I’m in, and sort of being cautious of that.” Age, race, gender, and socio-economic background all affect our sense of ourselves as strong and impactful leaders. Learning how to balance those power dynamics with the emotional load of being a manager is a critical skill set for administrators. Modeling approaches to maintain a positive state of mental health, talking about the emotional pressures of senior-level management, as well as creating language or a framework to provide solutions for that burden within one’s career path are much-needed solutions.

Gaining Skills

Combining formal training with on the job application of the skills learned provides the most effective approach for ensuring librarians in leadership and management positions have the necessary skills to be and feel successful. When developing a career ladder, these two methods should operate in tandem, if possible, to enable new leaders to apply the theory they learn.

FORMAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Formal leadership programs provide emerging leaders with a foundation of leadership and management theory, which then inform their practice. Academic libraries, universities or colleges, or library professional organizations offer such programs. ARL Leadership Fellows, Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN), and Tall Texans are examples of specific programs administrators participated in.¹⁰⁰ Most participants pursued these formal leadership programs as they advanced into more senior roles, and not as they first entered into leadership and management positions. Their timeline for participating in such programs speaks to the identity shift leaders experience as they move more into administrative roles, when they rely less on their functional expertise first learned in library school.

Formal leadership programs prepare librarians to assume leadership and management roles, as well as support their development once they are in those positions. Kate recalled that before she assumed an interim department head position, she participated in “a brand-new program called the State Library Leadership Institute. We met once a month, and it was really great.” Kate’s positive experience participating in that leadership institute led to feeling confident about her ability to take on more responsibilities. She developed relationships through the cohort and could engage in leadership topics during the program, and then apply that knowledge in her daily practice. While Kate felt statewide and national programs were influential, she found that programs she participated in at her university, including project management training as well as a 360-management course “helped me to understand these different skills and to help me organize my thinking about them.” National or statewide residency programs naturally remove a library leader from her daily context, which fosters connections with the theory presented in the training that are different from a local program. When administrators and librarians consider which kinds of training to engage with, residency is a key factor, as not all emerging leaders have the flexibility in their home life to travel for training or, in many cases, the institutional financial resources to pay for their participation.

For those who participate in formal training programs, one of the key outcomes of the experience is the cohort they meet. As a department head and even a senior-level administrator, a leader no longer has the same kind of peer group she had as a practitioner. There is competition for internal and external resources, which makes forming connections and bonds with other department heads or fellow administrators more challenging. The network that library leaders develop during a program is equally, if not more valuable than the program’s content. Kate commented on the impact of that network and explained, “The institute was really helpful, especially the experience afterward. I met a core group of middle managers, and we would talk every month. There was someone to email or call if you have an issue or need a sounding board. Those relationships have been the most useful—having people you respect, and to be able to see the success that they have had at their institutions” has been valuable. Providing practitioners and managers with opportunities through professional engagement to further develop their networks proves incredibly valuable for library leaders and is a main source of support as they continue in their careers.

Professional organizations and individual libraries should find resources to provide funding for professional development to ensure librarians establish networks early on, which then provide support as they become leaders and managers. Administrators, in turn, need

to encourage practitioners to be open to such skill development support gained through networks.

Sarah had not always had the funding to participate in leadership institutes and formal programs. When she did, Sarah noted that “the requirements to be accepted to these events usually require you have support from your supervisor. In addition, you have to be able to pay the bill. It wasn’t as merit-based as I had always assumed.” As the profession continues to develop leadership and management training programs, organizers should consider the future impact of accepting those librarians who can afford the training and how funding connects to who becomes developed as a leader and manager. Sarah found herself wondering about the connection between these program participants and succession planning within their organizations. She explained that the group’s makeup “made me wonder if leaders and managers in the profession were planning who was going to replace them, which is good. Succession planning is a good thing.” Now that there is a proliferation of leadership and management training, organizers should turn their attention toward developing a more representative cohort of library leaders from a variety of institution types with different levels of financial and human resources.

ESTABLISHING NETWORKS

Developing skills is certainly not limited to leadership and management theory learned in training programs. Establishing networks to draw on the expertise of others is a critical part of gaining leadership and management skills. Nearly all of the participants emphasized the impact of establishing a network as part of their skill development. Professional networks included those developed through professional engagement, formal and informal mentoring and coaching relationships, and those self-made over the course of a career.

Through professional associations, librarians develop formal and informal networks, which foster their skill development as they advance in their careers and serve as a central source of support. Early on in her career, Debbie’s supervisor encouraged her to become involved in ALA. Debbie remembered, “She kind of scared me a little bit and she just came to my desk one day and said, ‘You’re going to join ALA,’ and there was no further discussion about it—and I did.” Her colleague’s push led her to become professionally engaged. Participating in leadership opportunities through professional associations provide librarians with a certain amount of freedom to develop leadership and management skills and form networks outside of their workplace.

Through those opportunities, new managers and potential library leaders can practice and experiment with initiating change or pursuing specific projects without experiencing long-term ramifications, which they might had they done this work for their employer. Thinking specifically about strategic planning and understanding organizational culture and politics, Debbie developed a network while serving as president in a professional organization during a time when the board changed the organization’s structure. As a result of that change, Debbie shared, “I learned a lot about *politics* there that I really couldn’t have learned at my place of work at the time. I was glad to have that entry outside of the workplace.” As Debbie nears retirement and reflects on her career, she shared, “Being a member of ALA was very important for my entire career and continues to be. Some of my ALA relationships have been as valuable as supervisors to me. I have relationships within ALA

that I've had for thirty or forty years. And they are the people that I rely on." Similarly, Sarah found that one of her biggest sources of support grew out of serving in ACRL where she got to work with "a really good group of colleagues that were starting to bump up into management. We had similar concerns and similar situations, so we could rely upon one another." The relationship library leaders have with members of their networks evolved over the course of their careers. Sarah described the benefits these similar paths bring to the relationship and said, "It's been really good to see different experiences and how to shape the role we're in." Finding inspiration in others keeps leaders motivated to continue to refine their leadership and management skills. Knowing where to turn for professional advice and guidance are critical components of administrators' leadership and management skill development.

By establishing networks, library leaders have opportunities to observe and learn from more experienced leaders through formal and informal coaching and mentoring relationships. These relationships foster skill development and provide foundational support for practitioners as they move through different phases of their careers.

When reflecting on the arc of her career, Debbie shared how fruitful mentoring relationships were as she developed. She described the different types of mentoring relationships she encountered, building on a positive first experience. Debbie shared, "I think individuals have multiple mentors for different aspects of their career or life. You may have a mentor who has provided you guidance on administrative aspects of your career, who's had no real influence on your research direction." Describing one framework for mentorship a colleague had explained to Debbie, she said, "There are directional mentors, which is almost a very transactional relationship" in which mentors and coaches provide guidance for specific skill development or working toward a particular goal, such as strategic planning or developing research skills. Continuing, Debbie explained, "There are institutional mentors who provided a deeper understanding of how the institution works and what it takes to actually makes things happen." In those relationships, new managers and potential library leaders learn about organizational culture and how to successfully work within an institutional context through the experiences of their mentor or coach. Finally, there are those who provide opportunities to co-present, publish, or develop résumé-building skills by recognizing "opportunities with an entry point" to support new managers and leaders. In each type of relationship, the individual must first recognize an opportunity for skill development and identify a gap.

"Honestly, I was freaking out. It was very nice of him and I've called him a couple times since. Librarians are helpers. I've called a couple libraries and said, 'We're starting to think about this. I'm just wondering how you did it.' They gave me, 'This is what I did, point A to point B. This is how I go through this process.' Librarians are great people. If you decide to take a leadership position, I'm sure you can find a mentor who's going to help you get through this process."

—Michael, library director

Whether through formal or informal relationships, mentors and coaches play crucial roles in demystifying the realities of leadership and management roles. As the number of senior library leaders retiring increases, the profession must work with new leaders and managers to develop and maintain networks with the goal of explaining and modeling the leadership and management skills needed to be successful in advanced roles. Such networks will provide models of positive leadership styles to foster skill development of future library administrators.

Self-made networks have the largest impact on participants' leadership and management skill development and, equally important, their sense of themselves as successful administrators. In contrast to Debbie's experience forming relationships, Sarah shared, "I've never had a formal mentor. I just grabbed the ones near me who were awesome." Her less formal approach extended to observing her supervisors' leadership styles as she sought to build her network and her own skill base. She explained, "The most powerful leadership experiences I've had is being well led. Then, also, sometimes not being well led." In addition to her observations of library leaders, Sarah also explained the importance of asking questions to strengthen her skills: "It's mostly been casual, informal conversations with people. You know, just asking, 'How do you do this? What is this?' and not being afraid to ask questions." Not all potential library leaders will be comfortable speaking up and asking questions, which in part speaks to the power dynamics of all organizational cultures. For others, using those coaching and mentoring relationships as part of a skill acquisition process will feel more natural. Sarah has found the informal coach approach—within or outside of a mentoring relationship—worked well for her.

Library leaders seek coaches as needed when specific challenges crop up, rather than participate in formal leadership programs that may not directly relate to their particular organizational context. Sarah explained, "Coaching can be valuable in particular situations, and then the trick is that when you need it . . ." snapping her fingers she continued, "it's hard to just make the coach materialize." In addition to knowing who to reach out to for support, library leaders need to be in the right mindset to receive advice or guidance from the right person. Sarah said, "It's important to think about the kind of support you think you will need and then be in position to tap into them, and who you might need what from, because not everyone is a great mentor, and not everyone is a good coach." Similar to Debbie's experience of finding different mentors to respond to her development needs throughout her career, Sarah, too, though informally, sought support from mentors and coaches who could provide specific types of guidance in time of need. Senior-level administrators must encourage their staff to develop broad networks made up of leaders and practitioners with a variety of experience and skill sets to best support and foster their own skill development and career paths.

Establishing such networks is linked to one's career path. *When* such conversations about career aspirations take place are natural pause points for reflection. Grinning, Sarah described a part of her external network as her "invisible board of directors," which to her meant, "I call it my invisible board of directors because some of the people who sit at my table don't know that they do." Less formal than mentoring relationships, these networks provide coaching and guidance at the point of need, and not necessarily as part of a long-term goal. For most participants, they purposefully developed a network to support them as they advanced. Sarah described the qualities she looked for when establishing her "invisible

board of directors.” She commented, “They’re people that I greatly admire and who I feel have navigated tricky circumstances with integrity and that is something that I’m always very mindful of.” Being able to turn to those more senior in their careers, who demonstrate desired qualities like integrity, for coaching around challenging issues was important to Sarah. She developed the composition of her board over the course of her career, and this network included “some folks who I do know because I’ve become quite close to them, and others I don’t.” One’s network is no longer limited to geographic proximity and can become more developed through the use of social media and informal communication channels like Twitter groups. Such a network provides opportunities to convey the daily realities of leadership and management roles and provides models for new leaders to emulate as they develop their skills. Similar to the emphasis placed on establishing networks earlier in their careers, participants continued to develop networks that met their needs as they advanced into more senior roles.

When creating a career ladder and leadership pause points to provide skills and support for development, library leaders should carefully consider their learning and work styles to foster a network to best enable their growth. A suite of different coaches and mentors will be preferred for some learning and work styles. For others, working closely with a smaller number of people over the course of one’s career will be more natural.

LEARNING THROUGH LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT LITERATURE

For others, they develop their skills by reading leadership and management literature as they find they need a broader understanding of what they experience on the job. As she considered possible methods for gaining new skills, Sarah remembered, “As a librarian, I read a lot. I went through the management bookshelves at the public library. In part, it’s something you *have* to learn on the job, but you can help a lot of it with reading and some practical management tools.” By staying current on leadership and management topics, administrators can separate their daily practice from theoretical principles. As she advanced in her career, Sarah determined there were new areas of leadership and management she wanted to examine. She remembered, “I was interested in the latest ‘how to do it good,’ ‘how to be a good boss,’ ‘how to work in middle management’ best sellers—I read them all.” Unlike formal programs, becoming familiar with leadership and management literature does not necessarily equate to the direct application of learned skills. Such literature can provide a foundation upon which library leaders can build their understanding of those topics and then apply those skills. Senior leaders must help administrators demystify the realities of leadership roles to provide manageable expectations for skill development using the career ladder as a framework. Providing positive models will correct the misperception that there is one right way to “do it good” or a magic leadership success formula to deal with a particular challenge.

A broad foundation in leadership and management theory does not meet every administrator’s needs. Several participants enrolled in select online courses to focus on a particular skill, like budgeting. These classes were not part of a degree program. Participants first identified a skill gap and sought ways to address it. Taking a course offered by professional associations was one such approach. Sarah described her experience: “When I was moving into the interim position, one of the first online courses I took was a budgeting course

that was prepared by ALA.” One-shot or short-term classes enable administrators to learn a skill within a specific timeframe, without committing to a multi-year degree program. These classes are therefore less expensive, and institutional or individual membership to the association offering the class often lowers the fee. Sarah remembered the class “took place over a matter of weeks. I was able to put together a practice budget for making a request for our student employment dollars and the number of hours they would work.” These classes often couple theory and practice, which is a critical part of skill development.

PURSUING ADVANCED DEGREES

Pursuing advanced degrees speaks to the evolving needs leaders have as their responsibilities change over the course of their careers. Changing jobs, or preparing to change jobs, are necessary pause points on a librarian’s career path, when administrators should consider how or if an advanced degree would prepare them with the necessary skills for a next step. A small number of participants pursued advanced degrees early on in their formal leadership and management roles. As one might expect, more administrators enrolled in programs as they advanced. While a few participants pursued a second master’s degree, most entered into PhD or EdD programs. With more job ads stating a preference for candidates with advanced degrees, as a demonstration of research skills and publishing experience, library leaders should consider how such a degree program will make them more attractive to a potential employer.

The most common reason librarians pursue advanced degrees is to have the opportunity to delve deep into topics that interest them and that could be applied to their daily work. For these administrators, learning policies and practices on the job is not enough. They felt the need to step back from their daily work and immerse themselves in a topic that they could then apply. When we spoke, Sarah had recently decided to enroll in a PhD program, and anticipated that her PhD would give her “broad and deep skills that I could not necessarily learn on the job and be able to plow them back into my work.” The second reason library leaders pursue advanced degrees is to address the perception that not having a terminal degree would be a barrier to more senior positions like that of dean or director of libraries. The third reason is having aspirations of moving outside of libraries one day and into university or college administration. Sarah aspired to move in higher education administration and “thought the doctorate would be the first stepping stone.” While some of the skills administrators gain through these advanced degree programs can be readily applied in their daily work, other skills will only be applied at the most senior levels. Each administrator must consider her own career path when deciding how best to gain necessary skills.

The proliferation of and institutional support for advanced-degree programs in education leadership, organizational dynamics, and library science represents a new phase in the professionalization of librarianship and higher education. Sarah shared her misgivings about pursuing an advanced degree. Although she had a lot of support from strong mentors who encouraged her to apply to these programs, Sarah found she “was resistant to it because an Ed doc [Education doctorate], in particular, it feels really pro forma. It feels like credentialism, and I was not excited about that.” Finding a program with a curriculum that provided her the opportunity to explore issues in higher education she was passionate

about encouraged her to persist. Sarah remembered thinking, “I want to do more stuff like this, and how can I do that? I wanted to build on the leadership concepts and ideas that I had learned at this institute. That’s how I decided to get the doctoral degree.” The field of librarianship has become increasingly professionalized, and second master’s degrees and even PhD or EdD degrees have become required or preferred qualifications for mid-level managers or senior leaders.¹⁰¹ Librarians should consider how such degree programs provide opportunities to further develop a theoretical understanding of leadership and management concepts, and how the program they choose resonates with them as practitioners and partners in higher education.

EXPERIENCE

For those librarians whose careers began in the 1980s and 1990s, many feel they received a lack of leadership and management training and support as they advanced in their careers. Personal motivation was their driver to develop leadership and management skills. When he entered into his first management role, Tom worked for a library dean “who was certainly of a different era and I learned things from him. Our relationship was once a month he’d invite me down to his office and he’d tell me stories about being a library leader for about an hour. And I would sit there and listen, and then I would leave.” The leadership approach Tom described was very much a one-way communication style, rather than the coach approach Kate and others experienced. Tom’s experience speaks to the stories many administrators could tell about a management model in which previous generations of library leaders served as the sage on the stage imparting wisdom. In today’s complex higher education environment, everyone in an organization has a contribution to make and has value. The profession must move away from this more traditional approach to address the leadership gap.

Looking back on his career, Tom reflected on the possible support gained through formal leadership programs, mentoring relationships, or job shadow opportunities and said, “Yes, all of those would have been useful. The role that continued education plays has increased in importance over the last twenty to thirty years. And that’s because it’s such a critical need.” In Tom’s experience, any gap he identified in his own skill set required that he seek and, in some cases, develop a training opportunity for himself. He remembered, “There was a ‘here you are, start the program.’ You were very much expected to hit the ground running and be a professional and figure it out. It was a boots-on-the-ground situation.” Given the number of baby boomers retiring from senior-level administration positions in the coming years, the profession needs to become more encouraging of practitioners to seek leadership and management skill development. Potential library leaders should not have to rely solely on their motivation to find the training and support they need.

Senior leaders must develop formal and informal leadership training opportunities within their organizations to best support different learning styles. For many who acquire skills through experience alone, an iterative approach works well. Tom talked about the benefit of asking questions and said, “A little bit of trial and error, but a lot of asking questions. There really wasn’t an established training program for new managers in the organization.” Not all new managers will be comfortable asking questions or seeking feedback. In addition, senior leaders should provide opportunities for newer professionals to

become involved in leadership activities as a way of developing leadership and management skills. Tom reflected, “You just need to start being included as a less experienced person. I was lucky enough that my various department heads gave me a place at the table in terms of listening and having a chance to contribute.” In Tom’s experience, the support his department head offered him provided an informal opportunity to learn leadership and management skills. The on-the-job training Tom described here mirrored Kate, Debbie, and Sarah’s stories in that Tom’s skills development was experience-based. Not all of those experiences were positive or successful, but they gave him the opportunity to consider different approaches and solutions to a variety of situations. Tom went so far as to say he felt at times that he was being “thrown into the deep end, which was great. That’s actually—sometimes for me—a good way to learn.” More librarians will feel better prepared to seek senior leadership roles if provided with experience-based *as well as* theoretical foundations of leadership and management skills. This dual approach helps to ensure that a variety of learning styles and comfort levels are considered, which will increase the number of librarians pursuing senior positions.



Providing leadership and management opportunities through both formal and informal approaches enables library leaders to scaffold their skill development based on their current and anticipated needs. Coupling experience and theoretical knowledge is the most viable method for ensuring library leaders advance in their careers prepared for the challenges new positions and responsibilities demand. The final piece of skill development is the ability to turn around and then offer opportunities to your colleagues. Through these components of a leadership career ladder, we can best develop a leadership pipeline for the profession.

Career Path

“It’s that classic tale. If I had known what I know now and had the skill set when I was twenty-one instead of forty-one, I think I would have gone along a different path. I had an undergraduate degree in history and I wanted to get a PhD in history, but it didn’t work out because you couldn’t get a job. And that was twenty years ago. So I went into librarianship. I was thinking maybe I’d like to work in museums, and then I ended up getting into reference and doing that. I like working in higher education. It’s got some problems, but I still like being on campus. I just fell into it. It wasn’t really something that I said, ‘This is what I want to do.’ I have a good job and I enjoy it, but it wasn’t a conscious decision that I made. If I had to do it all over again, I would have put a lot more thought into where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do and what I was actually about, who I actually was. But youth is wasted on the young, I guess.”

To understand librarians’ motivations to assume leadership and management roles, it is valuable to learn the decisions they made along the way which led to their roles as senior-level administrators. In this second part of the interview, participants were asked to reflect on their career paths. They were asked to consider: What they might want to do over if they had the chance?¹⁰² Who was the most influential person in their library careers? And what was the best advice they had received related to librarianship? Overwhelmingly, models of positive leadership, which they observed in their supervisors’ behavior, influenced their own career paths and became a motivating factor for their decision to advance.

Many participants named a current or former supervisor as the most influential person in their library careers. These positive role models provide daily examples of what leadership and management can and should look like in academic libraries. To create a leadership pipeline for our profession, we must focus on providing as many realistic and positive illustrations of leadership and management roles and responsibilities for those early in their careers. These positive models have a substantial impact on how practitioners view leaders and managers, and how they begin to see themselves assuming those roles. The advice participants shared primarily related to soft skill development. Most of this advice came from those influential figures. Not only should we provide positive examples of leaders and managers, we also need to open up the conversation around the skills needed to be successful in those roles. Soft skills largely determine one’s sense of success as a leader and manager.

Do-Over

JOB-SPECIFIC

One common do-over librarians wish for is related to either staying in a particular job or domain-based area or pursuing a different position. This do-over echoes the confidence and sense of purpose librarians feel early in their careers, when their work most closely follows their training as practitioners. The shift away from purely domain-based roles, which occurs throughout an administrator's career, leads some librarians to lament the absence of domain-based responsibilities in their portfolios.

As a result of the shifting focus of their work, library leaders need to find new sources of job satisfaction as they advance. Referring to the size of the university, library, and scope of her responsibility, Kate expressed some doubts about "going into straight-up administration. . . . I wonder if going into core management, which is what interested me early on is not somehow limiting." As a library branch manager, Kate remembered having daily interactions with her users, and remembered that "was when I felt the most confident, energized, and that my role was valuable in contributing to the organization." The shift into a narrower portfolio with associated functional work limits the ability of administrators to have daily contact with users. Senior library leaders must make these realities clear to potential managers and, where possible, add flexible time for more domain-based work to keep managers motivated and engaged. Senior leaders should also acknowledge the shifting knowledge base newer managers need to embrace as they advance. No longer solely rooted in their area of expertise, managers must demonstrate leadership and management skill competencies to be effective.

In addition to a changing knowledge base, library leaders also experience less instant gratification related to their direct contributions to the research and learning missions of their universities. Kate recalled the impact she felt her reference work had on her ability to solve problems. Kate said, "It's kind of nice because you were dealing with researchers who had real, immediate issues." In leadership and management roles, the fruits of one's efforts may not be evident for weeks, months, or years later, which can make sustaining engagement and motivation difficult in such challenging work. As an AD, Kate did not have that daily interaction with researchers. Moving into more senior administrative roles, Kate also felt her portfolio shift to one with a focus on human resource policies and procedures to keep the library running. Understanding policies and procedures is an inevitable and much-needed part of administrative work. Senior library administrators need to work with library leaders as they advance to find value in such duties.

Creating alternative leadership models to share administrative tasks across units or divisions facilitates a new manager's shifting identity and enables her to better fill her role as an administrator. Part of this change in self-perception should also include the ongoing value placed on one's original area of expertise. Kate's observations led her to believe that "while people want a good manager, they are also more interested in a good leader who has a specialty kind of area," which not all AD positions include. Senior library administrators must be transparent about the shift away from domain-based work as leaders take on more administrative duties to ensure retention of library leaders over the course of their career. Talking openly and frankly about the kinds of tasks administrators cannot spend their time doing will ease this transition. Providing support for those who decide management

work does not satisfy them is a second critical component to retain qualified and engaged library leaders.

PURSuing ADVANCED DEGREES

The regret most participants expressed related to the length of time they waited to pursue an advanced degree, like a second master's, an EdD or a PhD. Completing a terminal degree on top of a large administrative load can prove too daunting for administrators. Sarah sighed and reflected, "I just started a PhD program, and I wish somebody had told me when I was just starting out in academia, 'Get a PhD!'" As administrators move into new positions throughout their careers, a terminal degree becomes a more highly desired qualification for job candidates. As the profession moves toward placing value on terminal degrees as a preferred credential for senior-level administrators, senior leaders should demystify the work associated with pursuing those programs. Sarah went on and shared, "My boss didn't even buy into me working on a second master's, which are super common in academic libraries. I wanted to do it. I'm a learner, and it worked out really well for me." Administrators must coach library leaders to self-identify as learners, with needs that evolve over time, as well as encourage those who may not see themselves as a fit for an advanced degree program to consider the benefits and downsides of how the credential will fit into their career path. The profession should advocate for further training and education for those interested in advancing into more senior-level positions, or release time to better enable senior administrators to pursue advanced degrees as part of their service or scholarship requirements. For those librarians without faculty status, individual organizations could consider distributing an administrator's portfolio across the library to enable that manager to complete a program.

Personal interest and an understanding of the higher education job market were two motivating factors participants pointed to as they explained their interest in pursuing advanced degrees. Sarah described herself, "I'm a learner. I'm motivated." Sarah felt having an advanced degree would make her a more attractive job candidate in the future. She explained, "What I'm finding as I look forward to the next phase of my career, is that I've never been on the tenure track. I had promotion in rank, so that's as close as it gets to showing evidence of professional engagement and impact." Through her degree program, Sarah will develop skills to add to her professional portfolio. Sarah believes that her "career is on hold until I make some changes." By pursuing an advanced degree, Sarah felt confident she will "be a better writer; I'm going to be a better leader of librarians who are on the tenure track." Sarah's comments spoke to a presumed or observed trend in library leadership and management positions.

Many job ads now indicate a preference for candidates with multiple advanced degrees. For library faculty positions, candidates coming in with tenure may be more attractive than those, like Sarah, who have not worked or led a team of library faculty before. As more vacancies become available in senior-level positions, the profession will need to determine how valuable advanced degrees and a publishing record are as they seek to fill these roles. Based on the assigned value, the profession and individual senior-level administrators should then encourage potential leaders to pursue these programs as part of the steps in their career path into upper-level management.

THE WORK OF RESEARCH AND PUBLISHING

A disconnect exists between the professional development activities library leaders feel compelled to engage in and those activities that are more highly regarded in the profession. Related to the lament above, several participants commented that as non-faculty librarians, they did not feel compelled to do research or publish. However, as they look back on their careers, they wish they had taken the time for that kind of professional contribution. Sarah shared, “Because I wasn’t on the tenure track, there was not this push to publish. I wish I had had different advice or even had been more aware that those keys open those doors.” Developing pause points to consider leadership development and opportunities as a companion to a career ladder prepares librarians to find a balance between their practice and research/publishing work.

Depending on their career trajectory and the kinds of roles they seek, specific times and aspects of balance will look different for different leaders. Looking back on her career, Debbie reflected, “The thing that I struggle with right now is the level of my professional contributions to the field versus my responsibilities internally. I’m drawn a lot to being a resource to others in the field and contributing to the field, but there’s just so *much* to be done here. I feel a real pull.” The pull toward research and publishing will be stronger for those librarians on the tenure track. For those who are not, talking with senior library administrators about the expectation of research and publishing within an advanced position is crucial to ensure that meaningful contributions are made to our field. Those conversations should also include details of how all librarians—regardless of their faculty status—can contribute through professional service.

The profession must consider how they value professional engagement when developing and hiring senior leaders. Professional engagement brings recognition, prestige, and new capacities to academic libraries. Individual libraries should assess how a strong research and publishing background fits into the daily work of being an administrator. Such levels and types of engagement need to be rooted in institutional priorities and individual interests. As she thought about her focus as a young professional, Debbie did not appreciate the potential impact of research and publishing on one’s career. She shared, “That’s not something that I really anticipated very well when I first came out of grad school.” Instead, Debbie spent her time becoming involved with professional organizations. Debbie found that work rewarding; however, she now understands that her professional engagement may not be as compelling as a portfolio that includes examples of research and publishing. Debbie explained:

I feel like I haven’t been professionally busy in the way that looks good on paper to tenured faculty outside of libraries. I’ve been doing the things that I had been interested in and I have wanted to do for my organization. But I should’ve spent more time the last few years trying to do things that would look impressive to other people.”

For non-faculty librarians, it may be more difficult for them to find the time and support to research and publish. Instead, their supervisors should encourage them to be professionally engaged through other avenues, such as presenting at conferences and serving in professional organizations. If the profession expects a specific kind of professional engagement from its senior leaders, it needs to encourage those librarians not in faculty positions to be

active contributors to the field beginning early in their careers by researching and publishing. Individual academic libraries should also consider how they create time within a non-faculty librarian's day-to-day workload to engage in these activities, and how they reward research and publishing efforts.

APPLICATION OF DOMAIN-BASED LIBRARY SKILLS

Early career librarians often find themselves with narrower portfolios and areas of responsibilities than their more experienced colleagues. Deciding to pursue (or not) training or coursework in domain areas of librarianship outside of their original areas of expertise is a much-desired do-over. Most participants expressed regrets about their lack of technological skills. For those participants like Tom, who began their careers as the internet began to have an impact on libraries, most did not see the value of developing technology-related skills early on. Tom reflected, "At the time, I was going through library school, the impact of tech was still very, very new, and some of the professors were still trying to figure out how to incorporate things into their curriculum. I would have tried to focus a bit more on how digitization and metadata were going to inform what we were doing in the future." Providing career ladders for newer librarians enables them to scaffold their domain-based skills in response to or in anticipation of trends in the field and higher education. Tom linked his lack of training in technology with a lack of confidence early in his career as a manager. He shared, "I wish I would have had a little bit more guts and a little bit more self-awareness to realize that you don't have to be a technologist to learn technology." In addition to a lack of confidence, Tom also described a lack of interest in developing technology skills due to a limited understanding of his role in libraries.

Developing systematic methods for exposing library school students and new librarians to the breadth of the field is crucial to ensuring strong leadership for the profession. Such breadth of knowledge enables new librarians to onramp into the profession more aware of the role of academic libraries play in higher education. Such knowledge also serves as a foundation for those who pursue advanced positions. Due to a limited understanding of librarianship in library school, most participants, like Tom, did not see the connection between traditional library jobs and those with a focus on technology. He explained, "I thought, 'Well, I'll never be in a systems department so I won't take the XML course.' To this day, I'm like, 'XML, uhh.'" Recognizing a need for advanced training as he continued in his career, Tom pursued opportunities to develop competency once he had funding. As Tom recalled, "When you're starting out and your wage is lower, it's harder to invest so much in yourself when you're not really sure it will pay off." Librarians want to see a return on their investment, which includes more responsibilities reflecting these new skills, increases in compensation, or new job opportunities. As Tom's experience indicates, practitioners make formal and informal decisions throughout their careers to develop specific skills. Although the library profession now expects all incoming librarians to have a certain facility with technology, Tom's limited understanding of the opportunities available within the library profession and connections across position types persists. Having a broad understanding of the field earlier on in one's career enables a library leader to delegate more effectively—a much-needed skill. Pause points with built-in skill assessments and options for transitioning

into new positions or taking on new responsibilities result in a library leader who has a valuable, holistic view of academic libraries.

Most Influential Person

PERSONAL IMPACT

When describing the impact the influential person had on them, librarians talk about the support they felt they had received. Critical to the development of a leadership pipeline, supervisors play an important role in making leadership and management work transparent for potential library leaders. When thinking about her second library director, Kate said, “I felt that he was trying to creatively think about ways he could help develop my skills and mentor me in the direction I wanted to go.” Along with feeling supported to develop oneself and advance her career, librarians experience the benefit of working with supervisors early on in their careers, who foster an organizational culture that encourages openness and an environment of trust and experimentation. It is through such a culture that potential library leaders feel empowered to develop and apply leadership skills and to assume more advanced responsibilities. Kate recalled a supervisor who “gave us some ability to participate and manage our own affairs in the department, as long as we discussed it openly. She gave us a lot of leeway to run things as we saw fit.” In parallel to that feeling of personal empowerment, Kate also shared how this supervisor articulated a vision for the organization, which guided their work. The administrator “was very good about coming back to the bigger picture and explaining it to us. And she’s somebody I’ve gone back to at various times in my career.” As the library and management literature describe, the ability to create and articulate a vision is a core leadership competency. A vision which includes models of non-hierarchical leadership provides librarians with early experiences of empowerment. Librarians seek out these supportive coaches who provide encouragement as they develop as practitioners and as leaders.

RELATIONSHIP

A majority of librarians identify a current or former supervisor as the person who has been the most influential person in shaping their library careers. Supervisors play a critical role in leadership development. They provide positive and negative leadership and management models, they can support and empower potential library leaders, and they can speak about administrative roles from personal experience. For most participants, the length of time they worked with the supervisor contributed to how influential they felt the person had been. The longer they worked together, the more opportunities new managers have to observe a potential leadership model to learn from and emulate. Debbie remembered working with one supervisor for nearly ten years. The administrator had “hired me as a brand-new manager, trusting that I could do it, having not managed people before. I consulted closely with her while I was learning where the boundaries were, and she let me fly. She didn’t hamper me.” The support Debbie received early on, similar to Kate’s experiences, had a lasting impact. Debbie shared, “I still use her as a reference and call her just to keep in touch and to get advice. I don’t know where I would be if I hadn’t had such an awesome boss at that point in my career.” The powerful impact her former supervisor had on her career outlasted

their formal working relationship, and Debbie continued to benefit from the impact of that support. Many librarians benefit from coaching relationships as they develop skills and a sense of themselves as leaders and managers. The profession must consider how to provide optimal support through different relationships within an organization, including those between a supervisor and employee. Informal and formal mentoring and coaching relationships are key to establishing supportive networks.

Drawing on one's internal network enables new managers to observe the theory and practice of leadership and then apply it in their own work. Debbie remembered observing both her current supervisor and library director as she considered skills like motivation:

I had an excellent supervisor who I watched very closely of how she kept me motivated to do what I'm doing. This is somebody who taught me to do things, and I'd become very difficult to teach. I was never made to feel like I was doing something wrong, but she always managed to steer me.

From this supervisor, Debbie learned how to shift into a facilitator role and build the capacity of her team by applying interpersonal skills to maintain clear communication and expectations. From her library director, she observed the impact of many years of work and management experience and how those factors impact the leadership and direction of an organization. Such a model demystifies the leader role, which corrects misperceptions new leaders and managers often have. Debbie recalled, "I had a diversity of years right in front of me that I could watch in an academically critical and thoughtful way, and see how things work." Positive and negative models of leadership and management styles served as formative experiences for most participants.

INDIVIDUAL QUALITIES

Librarians place value on specific qualities an influential person has, how those qualities impact relationships, and the impact on one's development as a leader and manager. Personal qualities were attributes that could not be taught, unlike the skills discussed below, which can be learned over time. Supervisors who demonstrate curiosity foster engagement and the creation of a learning organization. Continuing to learn and to share that knowledge with the organization provides support to keep the organization motivated, regardless of individuals' career paths and interest in leadership and management work. Sarah worked for a library director who, as she neared retirement, continued to be inquisitive and sought learning opportunities. For Sarah, maintaining an interest in new ideas and trends in librarianship was a quality she valued when working for others. Sarah saw that her supervisor was someone "who asked and encouraged big questions and was not alarmed or put off by questions that may not be answerable." This kind of big-picture thinking inspired Sarah and others to be comfortable with ambiguity.

Supervisors who encourage others to see "promise and potential in change, rather than peril" foster organizational cultures that place value on comfort with ambiguity that is needed to navigate the complexities of higher education. Asking big questions leads to paradigm shifts in service models and organizational practices. Developing an organization of question-askers dispels the myth that leaders and managers have all the answers, and

instead moves the organization toward finding solutions for specific challenges, which the higher education environment demands of academic libraries to stay relevant and valued.

The most influential people also have a desire to continue their own leadership and management skill development and to model learning for their staffs and peers. New jobs and new responsibilities provide natural stop points along a leadership continuum to consider new skill gaps to address or build further competency. Sarah recalled her supervisor and how:

confident she seemed as a leader, and then when I got to know her as a friend, it became clear she really takes her role seriously. To me, that's what's inspiring and that's what I want to emulate. It is a job but it's not just a job. She sees her role as a leader being very important and tries to do the best job of it that she can every day and acknowledging that sometimes she didn't do a very good job and reflecting on that and figuring out why and trying to course correct going forward.

Continuing one's leadership and management skill development reveals for librarians the importance of addressing personal limitations despite the discomfort such acknowledgment may bring. Reflective leadership models also encourage emerging leaders to admit and learn from mistakes.

Other qualities Sarah saw in her supervisors included being “a really humble person, super smart, who is always approachable—regardless of how high they climbed—and someone who has a good sense of humor.” Being humble fosters a supportive and risk-taking culture. In the fast-paced environment of higher education, a sense of humor is an effective way to diffuse challenging situations when deployed at the right time. Learning to be calm and the ability to calm others enforces the notion that everyone in an organization has value—as Sarah explained, the importance of being able to “meet people where they were. No one felt belittled. People felt empowered.” The qualities participants underscored as most beneficial to them may be hard to instill in others with different temperaments. As library leaders determine how to most effectively develop their employees' skills, they must also model desired traits.

SKILLS

In addition to personal qualities, influential figures also bring specific skills to their organizations. Having the ability to navigate the larger context of a university, being transparent about decision-making, and balancing stakeholder needs to keep the library relevant to its communities are key skills. Observations of supervisors' skills have a lasting impact on how emerging leaders develop their style. Debbie experienced two different leadership skills sets early on in her career that influenced how she developed her own style. She explained: “The two people I've worked for the longest, the first one ran an amazing organization. The process was clean and clear. Any time you needed something, it was there. She had good staffing, but people weren't entirely sure of the vision.” From supervisors with such skills, potential library leaders learn the importance of organization and strong staffing to enable the organization to get the work done. However, the supervisor is not modeling an ability

to clearly articulate her vision for the organization. Being able to see and talk about how these skills become learned is a critical part of any leadership career ladder.

As the literature underscores, a senior administrator's ability to model approaches for crafting and implementing a vision points potential library leaders to the strategies for soliciting buy-in, building trust, and making change. Leaders and managers certainly need to deploy specific skills at certain times to be effective. Debbie described the second person she worked for who "had tremendous vision, knew where things were going, and was fearless in moving forward." Teaching potential library leaders about that kind of decision-making process and modeling different strategies foster leadership development within organizations. When considering the impact each of those two skill sets, Debbie explained, "The combination of the two styles is what I'm striving for. To run an organization that is trusted and has transparent systems. But at the same time, having that sense of drive and purpose and connectedness to the community, where you don't have to work too hard to figure out how you get things done." Understanding when to deploy specific skill sets signals an understanding of stakeholder needs and institutional culture and context—critical skill sets for successful leaders.

By observing his supervisor, Tom learned "how to manage the stress of a big workload and set boundaries. She taught me to just be workman-like and don't panic about things." Tom found he thrived working for someone who trusted him to implement a vision to move the organization forward. Through such an experience, new leaders learn how to develop time-management skills, prioritize work, and to model efficient and effective leadership and management traits. Working with supervisors who exemplified trust, a clear vision, and support to implement the vision modeled important leadership skills for emerging leaders. Tom recalled, "He would talk about where he wanted to take the organization, what kinds of things he would do, and we would end with a planning session. Once we moved ahead, I would share things with him and get feedback. We'd move forward. It was a very iterative process and the whole time it felt very much like a partnership." Similar to Kate and Debbie's experiences, Tom had the benefit of working for someone who, in order to grow her faculty, encouraged others to take leadership roles on projects and initiatives and provided them with support to be successful. Scaffolding the development and application of leadership and management skills, along with working in a supportive organization, best fosters and sustains growth.

Best Advice

MAINTAINING A GOOD FIT

Library administrators place great value on the concept of fit as it relates to their sense of success as leaders. The size of institution, organizational culture and structures, as well as the library's direction all make up the fit one feels within their library. Several participants commented on their sense of professionalism and advice they received related to fitting into the organizational culture. When Kate first began working as a department head in a new organization, she noticed that in comparison to her colleagues' dress, she dressed more formally. In Kate's experience, dressing like a professional symbolized an "expression of respect for yourself, for the position, for the institution, for those around you, if you're taking the position seriously." Over time, Kate learned that her more formal clothing

was off-putting to her staff. Kate's staff associated her professional attire with a closed-off personality. Instead, her boss suggested to Kate: "Take off your jacket or sit down instead of standing up when you're leading a conversation with a group of people. Just sit down among them." By changing her work style to fit her new organizational culture, which was a bit more casual, Kate found herself connecting more with her colleagues. Although a more reserved personality may cause more harm for a woman's leadership reputation, given gender assumptions about personality in western culture, male library administrators may also find more formal dress or behavior can lead to misperceptions. Maintaining formality, which can be necessary as part of one's job responsibilities, while investing in the process of getting to know one's staff, builds trust and fosters a supportive organizational culture for all, regardless of one's position in the organizational hierarchy.

Finding the right fit when job hunting is a second component of the fit concept, which includes feeling the freedom to pursue a better fit at a different library. Senior-level administrators who demystify leadership and management roles by telling the stories of their career path encourage library leaders and potential leaders to see themselves being successful in a variety of roles in different libraries. Debbie shared advice she had received early on in her career: "And the message once you're in a library—'you can't move'—is not the world. There are different advantages and disadvantages to other academic libraries, and finding the fit that's worth it for you is probably the most important thing." In Debbie's experience, librarians who remained in the same organization for years, even when they were not altogether happy with their position or the organizational culture, became ineffective practitioners. In addition to their own practice, the organizational culture suffers as well and can lead to a toxic or negative environment, which impacts others.

Creating pause points within a career provides a framework for considering fit with a different organization, and to consider next steps after completing an advanced degree, finishing a big project, life event, or change in organizational leadership. A colleague told Debbie, "When you're considering positions and whether or not a position is the right move for you, you need to be running toward something as opposed to running away from something." There will always be aspects of a position or organization that may not be the best fit. Rather than focusing on what was not working well in her current library, Debbie took a different tack when she considered a new job: "Rather than focusing on what do I want to eliminate or what would I want to move away from, I try to focus more on what do I want in this next job. That's helped me to determine whether or not it's the right move for me." Taking a more future-focused approach, helps library leaders evaluate new opportunities and select a position that would be the best fit.

Fit also refers to the match between a librarian's interests, skill set, personality traits, and their work/life balance. Kate remembered advice a former supervisor gave her and shared, "She wasn't naïve and she didn't try to tell me that there wouldn't be long hours or evenings or weekend work . . . but she did say, 'Always keep up your sports.'" Kate's supervisor referred to any kind of non-work-related activity, like travel. Setting limits on the boundaries of one's professional life ensures that "when you do perform, you're doing high performance." A person's work/life balance shifts over time. Working with new and potential library leaders to develop pause points for reflection as they move through their careers takes into account these personal shifts and enables the profession to support both men and women who have responsibilities outside of the workplace.

Maintaining a feeling of fit also requires developing “a strong constitution that guides you.” In Kate’s experience, having a strong constitution meant feeling confident about the direction of the organization and the decisions needed to be made to move the library forward. Such decisions become the result of a clear and articulated vision tied to organizational goals, which include hiring, promoting, and shifting work to provide others with opportunities and creating new initiatives. Having a strong inner compass enabled Kate to keep focused on her job responsibilities, which empowered her to make difficult decisions, knowing they were necessary. Kate reflected, “As leaders, you have to make difficult decisions, but you know in your heart that it’s the right thing to do. I think, even if no one else knows what you’re doing, you have to know why you’re doing it and stay strong to those inner convictions.” Kate observed when leaders did not follow that advice their staff became confused and unclear about their common goals. Decisions appeared to be made at random, as opposed to aligning with the library’s shared goals. People within the organization must feel valued, included, and supported. Library leaders who remain cognizant of their desired level of fit with their values and ethics make them feel like more effective and confident leaders.

SUPPORT

Supporting others in their personal and professional lives is another key piece of advice librarians receive. Demonstrating support signals to others you value them as the whole person and not just the role they fill within the organization. Sarah recalled a former supervisor who “always had a smile for everyone, always asked people how they were doing, and knew about their personal lives.” Sarah found that she thrived in that environment of collegiality and support. Sarah’s experience has had a long-term impact on her leadership development. As she explained, “I want to be that kind of leader.” Taking the time to send a note, make a visit, or show some expression of caring for the other person builds trust and buy-in throughout the organization. In addition to earning the respect of colleagues, such trust and buy-in become crucial to draw upon when library leaders face big decisions.

Becoming a supportive leader also requires librarians to establish boundaries to enable them to marshal energies when needed. Library leaders need to balance the priorities and work of the organization with the wellness of others, including themselves. Modeling and teaching their staffs to consider the balance builds healthy and supportive organizational cultures. Similar to the advice Kate received, Sarah learned she had to develop a strong constitution. Sarah remembered, “I started to realize not everybody’s problems are my problems, even if I am their supervisor. There are things you have to figure out on your own.” One example Sarah gave was the amount of time she took to respond to an inquiry. She underscored, “It’s okay to take your time and come back in a day or two or a week with an answer on something. That way you’re making sure that you’ve thought it through and you’re not being emotional about what you’re deciding.” Taking the necessary time to respond to an inquiry helps to ensure sound decision-making and a stable work environment with clear direction and expectations.

Coaching staff to make informed and carefully thought-out decisions based on such advice provides employees with one framework through which to develop their own leadership and management skills. Senior library administrators should encourage their

managers to provide coaching as they develop their staffs. Leaders who share examples of their personal leadership and management philosophies and workflows help others to make connections between theory and practice, as well as successes and failures, which demystifies the daily work of being a leader and manager in an academic library.

FOLLOW-THROUGH

Being a leader others can depend on to do her work and facilitate others' work ensures the achievement of strategic priorities, demonstrates the value of others, and leads to building meaningful and impactful relationships. Several participants shared pieces of advice they received related to the idea of follow-through or, as Tom phrased it, "Do what you say you're going to do." Follow-through leads to building trust and a positive organizational culture. When asked why that advice proved to be so important to him, Tom explained, "I think the most important part of my job from every angle is to be trustworthy, and when a person does what they say they're going to do, then you're somebody who can be trusted. If you don't have that, you have nothing." Being honest and upfront about the workload a library leader can and is willing to take responsibility for is critical. In Tom's experience, the idea of follow-through was much easier than the actual implementation of that concept. He lamented the challenges he faced and said, "I need to have a better system of keeping track of all the things that I say I'm going to do because there's just so much more of it now that it's easy to get lost." Library leaders who follow-through are able to build and maintain the trust of their colleagues and provide a positive model of balancing work duties.

Follow-through also includes addressing performance and other work-related issues as they come up, rather than waiting for an annual evaluation period or not addressing them at all. Tom explained, "Someone once said you have to be Barney Fife. You have to 'nip it in the bud, my friend.'" Approaching a performance conversation using open-ended questions focuses the discussion on the corrective behavior and work, rather than on personal criticisms. Similar to Sarah's experience providing and receiving support, developing a coach approach to personnel issues enables library leaders to provide support for their staff members while working to mediate performance gaps that exist. Coaching new managers to develop follow-through as part of a skill set models the importance of setting realistic expectations for one's self and others, implementing systems and structures to support work, and the importance of scaffolding experiences to make follow-through a personal and organizational behavior norm.

Motivation: First Management Position

INTENTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

Domain-based expertise in an area of librarianship becomes the root of practitioners' feeling of readiness to advance into formal management roles. Library leaders who actively seek advanced positions primarily draw their motivation from three sources: an interest in learning new things, advocating for their colleagues, and providing strategic direction. Kate recalled, "Eventually, I decided I wanted to move up in the world, both for the challenge of learning something new and doing something new, but also because I realized I just wanted to have a voice in the changes that would happen in the library or in the profession

as a whole.” The library literature implies that members of millennials and Generation X are more likely to see themselves contributing to the field beyond their daily work as practitioners and seek opportunities to have an impact.¹⁰³ Senior-level administrators need to consider how best to leverage this shift in thinking around the connection of individual contributions and the desire to contribute to the field. Creating alternative leadership models, including leading project teams or developing short-term or interim management responsibilities, provide emerging leaders opportunities to try on leadership roles, which foster and support younger generations of librarians’ interests and ambitions.

Advocating for colleagues and determining the strategic direction of a functional unit or department also motivates practitioners to seek advanced roles. In addition to having an impact on the organization and profession, Kate felt a sense of duty to advocate for her colleagues and their work. Before moving into this more advanced role, Kate found she was “not able to communicate those concerns up through the chain in an effective manner. So, the idea that I would have a seat at the table was appealing.” Not all practitioners will want to move into administrative roles. The profession and individual academic libraries must consider how to create alternative opportunities for those not in formal leadership and management positions to provide feedback and advocate for their work. Kate had observed the influence and impact senior leaders had on the planning process and felt she had a contribution to make. She believed “the large-scale strategic planning that I was interested in, I knew could only be led from a management position.” Developing transparent decision-making processes as well as formal and informal opportunities to give regular feedback to upper-level administrators and peers will provide new avenues for leadership development in libraries. Modeling decision-making for potential leaders will motivate some to pursue formal management roles. For these practitioners, looking holistically at the organization’s needs will be an exciting opportunity, enabling them to have a broader impact on library services.

Telling stories of early management experiences will also foster interest and may motivate practitioners to seek advanced roles. Developing formal and informal programs to demystify the role of library leader compels potential and new managers to determine the root of their motivation to assume these advanced positions. Such programs should include stories from library leaders about their own identity shifts throughout their careers, as well as anecdotes about areas of job satisfaction. Due to the highly collaborative nature of work in academic libraries, sources of job satisfaction have evolved. Kate recalled that there “are some people who fundamentally get their most satisfaction and pride out of their own individual efforts and what those lead to.” When serving as a leader and manager, personal satisfaction should take a backseat to foster the most inclusive and transparent work environment. The team-based model many academic libraries have shifted to prepares librarians to find satisfaction through the work of others and teams.

When developing a leadership pipeline, the profession needs to emphasize for leaders that to be successful they must find a new source of satisfaction and personal motivation. Kate described the positive leadership models she’s observed: “For some, the greatest satisfaction is helping others to achieve some larger success than any one of them could achieve on their own.” Part of describing the role of leader and manager is to emphasize this shift in personal motivation. Library leaders should model and discuss opportunities to find new sources of job satisfaction, which could come from flexible work assignments or time for

research and publishing. In her current role as a newer administrator, Kate has found: “If I’m not doing enough of my personal research or writing, I tend to not feel happy. That can flow into the other area of my work.” That feeling of balance Kate referred to, impacts the level of satisfaction she feels as a manager. She explained, “I’ve learned that I feel the happiest and most energized to do areas of personal accomplishment when I feel that I’m doing a good job as a manager and helping others to work together and develop themselves.” Developing alternative leadership and management models in libraries to meet the needs of emerging leaders who derive satisfaction from different sources of motivation will help close the leadership gap. Deploying both formal and informal leadership and management opportunities enables the profession to take advantage of specific skill sets and personalities best suited for different aspects of administrative work.

PUSHED

Administrators and the profession as a whole must be mindful of the multiple pathways to leadership that exist for librarians. Not all librarians feel motivated to pursue management positions. For many, administrators compel them to take on these roles during challenging situations, which push them into their first leadership and management positions. Looking back on those early experiences, participants did not necessarily feel being pushed was to their detriment, for some it was the nudge they needed to move into a new role with exciting challenges.

To best prepare practitioners to assume advanced roles, the career ladder should include leadership opportunities and training early on and throughout one’s career to enable librarians to feel ready and confident to take on advanced roles. Debbie found herself working in a library with a growing cataloging backlog. She remembered, “I didn’t really have a choice. The head of the department left. I was the only other person who knew cataloging. The head of the library just said, ‘Okay, you will do this.’” Like those who intentionally seek advanced roles, domain expertise often becomes the impetus to push others into early management positions. An institutional leadership vacuum requires someone to step up and assume that position to prevent the department—and by extension, the library—from losing value within the university system. As Debbie reflected, stepping into that role “was clearly needed. It was the right thing for the institution. And it was something I knew I could do.” The almost exclusive focus on honing domain expertise early in one’s career prevents broader leadership and management skill development to occur. The profession should consider how to develop opportunities for both domain and leadership skill development to best prepare practitioners to step into advanced roles.

Formal and informal leadership development prepare new leaders for interpersonal challenges characteristic of advanced positions. At the time she made the jump from librarian to supervisor, Debbie thought little about her preparedness to take on that additional responsibility. Instead, she focused on the broader “opportunity to explore a different part of library work, which was exciting.” When thinking specifically about the supervisory piece, Debbie reflected, “Looking back, I must have had blinders on. I was probably terrified. I should have been even more so just because it’s a huge responsibility, and I guess I just somehow screwed up my courage to take that piece of it on.” The majority of participants who felt pushed into their first management role expressed similar sentiments of being unprepared

or unaware of the impact that role would have on their practice. As an internal candidate, Debbie felt supported to move into her new role “within an environment where I felt comfortable and knew people.” Regardless of whether they sought out the opportunity to advance, feeling supported by colleagues and the library administration was a critical part of participants’ sense of their success in those roles. Encouraging new professionals and new managers to develop internal and external networks to draw support from as they enter new positions or assume new responsibilities will further build confidence and feelings of preparedness to make the shift into managerial work.

LIFESTYLE FACTORS

The profession and individual academic libraries need to create a suite of options to compensate practitioners for their work. Compensation takes many forms, including increased salary, bonus pay for completing a specific project, or flexible time to engage in professional development or in response to responsibilities outside of work. A small number of participants gave family or financial reasons as their primary motivation for pursuing an advanced position. Tom reflected, “What motivated me to move on with managerial roles, frankly, was wanting to support my family. I needed more money. . . . I wanted to get married, have a family, and I needed to earn more.” Librarians who draw their satisfaction from applying their domain expertise often feel conflicted about shifting their roles from library practitioners to managers and administrators. However, Tom understood that to make more money, “that’s how you do it, by becoming a director. I really struggled deciding whether I should do that or try to adjust our lifestyle in other ways.” Ultimately, Tom chose to pursue a management position to best support his family. As the profession considers how to create a leadership pipeline, library leaders should also consider how to compensate practitioners for their work, both within and outside of management roles to ensure that the most highly qualified people fill the senior positions *and* practitioner roles.

Motivation: Subsequent Leadership and Management Roles

CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Hitting a ceiling at their current institution leads managers to seek new positions elsewhere. Eventually, Kate found she needed to move out to move up into senior-level administration. She remembered, “I didn’t feel very appreciated, and there was really nowhere else for me to go.” In addition to not feeling appreciated, Kate also remembered feeling as though she had hit a ceiling. She shared, “I was head of public services, but I wanted to go to the next level. There were no opportunities for me to move up while I was there, so I found a new place to go.” Hitting a ceiling became more of a motivating factor as participants advanced than it had been earlier in their careers, when they could pursue a project manager or department head position in their current organization or choose to leave and enter into that role at a new organization. Similar to the motivating factors that led participants to pursue their first leadership or management positions, feeling as though they had a voice and influence over the processes governing their organizations continued to impact their decision to stay or leave their library.

NEW CHALLENGE

Some managers grow their positions in the same organization, either as a result of their own motivation to assume new responsibilities or with the encouragement of their supervisors. Sarah found her department head role evolving as she continued working for the same organization. As Sarah remembered, her responsibilities and oversight grew and then she became an AD. “It’s been dynamic and busy and challenging, but I liked that progression rather than all or nothing.” For Sarah, whose workplace is close to her family, moving to a new library is not an appealing option. Unlike Kate, who actively sought to advance by accepting a job elsewhere, Sarah’s role expanded under the direction of the library dean. Sarah shared, “By the time the AD role was proposed, I knew enough to know I wanted to do it, and I wanted to contribute to the senior leadership team and for my unit to have more of a voice.” To become a senior-level administrator, managers need to understand domain areas of librarianship more broadly.

Managers should also be confident in their ability to implement the strategic vision of the organization and have a firm understanding of the institutional context and culture to feel successful. Similar to her first management role, Sarah felt this senior leadership position “came about at the right pace for me, but I had to level up again when I started working at that level.” Library leaders who feel supported by their supervisors to advance demonstrate confidence in the face of these new challenges. Having a conversation with the manager about future opportunities and interests after a certain number of years or types of experiences one has within an organization is a beneficial pause point. The gradual expansion of her portfolio enabled Sarah to feel comfortable with the move up to the senior leadership team. For managers who seek new challenges as they advance in their careers, balancing an opportunity with the support to grow into that role proves important for developing confidence with their ability to meet the demands of their increased responsibility.

LIFESTYLE FACTORS

As library leaders continue in their careers, family (and less so, financial reasons) motivate them to pursue senior-level positions. Experiencing shifts in work/life balance becomes another pause point, which encourages library leaders to consider next steps. Considering ways to support managers to either encourage them to stay with the organization or, if accepting a position elsewhere, ease the transition is vital to create a supportive professional culture. Tom remembered deciding to pursue a new position in response to the worsening situation at his son’s school. He found the school system was not providing substantial learning opportunities. Tom shared, “There are some times when you do have to do some give-and-take between what you want professionally and what is best for your family. I’ve been lucky when a lot of these times I’ve been able to combine the two.” At another point in Tom’s career, he found himself living apart from his family and began looking for a new job to relocate. For those participants like Tom, who made the decision to change jobs based on family reasons, they had to accept “moving is extraordinarily disruptive, and to do that to a family is not something to be taken lightly. So it’s got to be worth it.” Family responsibilities weigh heavily on a library leader’s decision to advance in her career, which impacts who pursues senior-level positions. Our organizational structures fail to recognize the need for distributing leadership responsibilities more broadly or in response to changing

responsibilities at home, which could encourage more practitioners to feel comfortable pursuing advanced positions. Such alternative leadership models deserve further study to determine feasibility.



An emerging leader relies on their supervisor's influence to seek advanced positions, develop skills to be successful in those positions, and to observe leadership models of behavior and practice, which they apply throughout their own careers. Administrators must consider how to challenge their emerging leaders as well as others in their organizations to remain engaged and find growth opportunities to move the institution and profession forward. Finding meaningful pause points within an individual's career provide opportunities to fine-tune necessary skills, draw support from networks, and potentially seek new positions in an advanced leadership role. Such times also provide opportunities to consider the shifting identities administrators experience throughout their careers as their work focuses more on facilitating the work of others. Taking the time to address these identity transitions will mitigate career regrets later on and will keep library leaders motivated and feeling supported to continue in their chosen career paths.

Developing the Next Generation of Library Leaders

“Lessons learned. If people are looking to move up and to take on more of an administrative responsibility, it’s really important to know why you want to do that. A lot of people think that it’s the natural progression of things. I’ve put in the time. I’ve gotten good performance reviews. I’m told I’m a good researcher. I’m told I present well, so naturally, I should move up the ladder. It’s actually those people who end up finding out that ‘this is not what I thought it would be or don’t do as well,’ and are really dissatisfied. Because it’s a whole other career trajectory. That’s what I’m finding anyway. I have an arm outstretched behind me at all times to my old positions where I don’t want to lose my fluency. I don’t want to be a master of nothing. That’s my darkest thought about the job that I have now. I sometimes worry that really what I am is an administrator of human resource issues, and I’m no longer a librarian. I wouldn’t put it that way to someone who was thinking about it. But I would really, really implore them to think about why? What are the reasons that they want to be an administrator? What do they hope to achieve, and what are they willing to give up? Because I think that’s my problem. I haven’t really decided what I’m willing to give up. That’s where I am today.”

In order to meet the needs of our users in the coming years, libraries must have motivated and qualified leaders. The quotation above reflects the identity crisis many librarians experience as their roles shift from solely that of practitioner to manager and administrator, as well as how they think about developing the next generation of library leaders. Several participants focused their comments on the “what” of leadership and management, and a number focused on the “why.” The “what” included specific tasks or functions associated with being a librarian and later on an administrator as well as trade-offs to work/life balance as their responsibilities at work or in their personal lives changed. The “why” specified motivations and interests in pursuing leadership and management roles. In addition to working with employees to develop specific skill sets, participants also encouraged their reports to consider what interested them about becoming leaders and managers. Responses to questions about what lessons they passed on to their direct reports, how their career

paths may differ from their employees, and the impact leadership opportunities may have on their organizations and on the profession provide insight into methods we can use to close the leadership gap in academic libraries.

Lessons Learned

KNOW WHAT AND KNOW WHY

Librarians need to consider their motivations for advancing into leadership and management positions to ensure it is the right fit for them by understanding the rewards and limitations of those roles. Becoming an administrator means making a choice between being a full-time practitioner and instead becoming a facilitator of library work. The identity crisis new managers experience becomes more pronounced as they move further into leadership and management work. Creating pause points and a career ladder are two methods to guide practitioners as their roles evolve—both within leadership positions and separate from those positions—to facilitate their understanding of personal motivations for pursuing these advanced roles.

The first shift comes with early leadership and management experiences, where domain-based tasks become balanced with leadership work. As practitioners assume formal management roles by becoming unit or department heads with direct reports, they experience a second change in their professional identities as their work evolves to become more of an even split between domain-based and managerial work. As administrators, library leaders experience a third identity shift, where domain expertise is but a small part of the skill set needed to be successful in their roles. Discussing these shifts with potential library leaders throughout their careers will further demystify lead-

ership and management roles for practitioners and administrators alike. Telling personal stories and sharing experiences of key moments when these identity shifts occur will enable others to surmount the challenges of “know what” and “know why” for themselves.

Part of the process of understanding the what and why of leadership and management roles relies on strongly established professional networks, which may evolve throughout one’s career. Similar to the coaching and support they received earlier in their careers, a number of participants also talked about how they applied lessons learned from their own skill development strategies in their work with employees to develop necessary skill sets to become successful leaders and managers. As Debbie worked with her direct reports, she found herself “identifying strong points, giving positive reinforcement, making suggestions

“All kinds of people can do this job. You can get all these skills. In our culture, we have this idea that certain people can do certain things and that certain people have certain talents. Anything can be learned. Don’t be shy about doing things. You shouldn’t feel shy about trying to move things forward. A lot of people can be really great leaders. They just don’t have the confidence in themselves to do it.”

—Dave, library director

about conferences or training that can help.” Debbie’s leadership style focused on providing coaching based on her own experiences.

The lessons learned that Debbie shared with her staff were suggestions for techniques to be successful in their roles and as they considered advancing. Debbie explained, “One of the harder things to learn is how to research and publish, but I think positive coaching and feedback go a long way—being really approachable for those kinds of conversations.” The support Debbie received early on led her to advance into more senior roles. She brought that kind of style to her relationships with her own reports. She shared, “There’s a real gap in who wants to be a leader or not. It is important to show people when they’re demonstrating leadership even if they’re not aware of it. Showing them the different ways leadership expresses itself.” Debbie sought to foster an organizational culture where employees had opportunities to experiment with their developing leadership style and skills while she provided coaching and mentoring.

Career ladders and leadership pause points, which incorporate opportunities to consider and develop skills to then advance into more senior-level positions, cannot only be conceived of linearly. Organizations need to provide support for those desiring to step out of leadership and management roles, whether temporarily or permanently. Tom expressed concerns about the connection in our society between leadership and management and professional success. When seeking or being placed in a leadership role, Tom felt there should be the opportunity to evaluate. In Tom’s experience, “some people gravitate more naturally to leadership. The trick of leadership is finding your sweet spot.” Equally important as providing the structures and spaces for librarians to experiment with applying their leadership skills in new roles, so too must administrators consider how to support those people who “think they want to be leaders or managers. And they do it, and they don’t like it. It’s also okay to step back.” Although Tom came to enjoy leadership and management roles, he did express regret that he was unable to continue being a practitioner *and* provide financially for his family.

There exist few opportunities in academic libraries to earn more money without taking on leadership and management roles. He reflected, “The worst thing about our society are the structures that we’re in that to make more money, you have to have more people. A lot of people go into management and leadership for the wrong reasons.” Senior leaders need to work with their staff to demystify leadership and management roles while addressing the impact that assuming those positions has on one’s identity as a librarian in order to create healthy organizational cultures. To provide career pathways for librarians, academic libraries must consider how to balance the opportunities they provide with meaningful rewards for those who choose to take on additional responsibilities. Rewards could include flexible schedules, increased funding for professional development opportunities, or student assistants or short-term paraprofessional staff to support an increased level of responsibility.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

A number of participants offered lessons learned that described how they approach interpersonal relationships to create the most supportive culture. Kate explained, “The most important thing is people. And that relationship-building component—at all levels. Engagement is the single most important thing to keep in mind.” Modeling for staff how and why you value all employees—those with institutional longevity and those new to the

organization or field—builds trust, buy-in, and support across a department and library. Through weekly conversations with direct reports, Kate established an organizational culture rooted in supporting others and valuing interpersonal relationships. She saw her role as supporting the staff members' work and modeling for the staff the benefit of asking questions and engaging in leadership and management topics to strengthen people's skill sets. Kate shared, "My natural tendency is to listen and be supportive. It's important to me to always be supportive of the person, their initiatives, questions, and needs they bring to me as their supervisor." As someone who moved up quickly through her career into increasingly advanced roles, Kate understands the importance of a supervisor who serves as a sounding board and conveys confidence in one's ability to do the work. Modeling such behavior builds an organizational culture rooted in supporting and encouraging individual development.

That leadership model inspired Kate to try new things, and it was such a lesson Kate brought to her staff in her AD position. Kate reflected, "My job is to develop people. And as long as I'm developing people, I'm still in a teacher role, a mentor role, a coach role. That's one of the things I hope my staff is learning," how to be coaches and develop others. As Kate described, one of her aims was to encourage her employees to take on these kinds of coach roles for themselves, to build the capacity of the organization. Through regular conversations and by modeling supportive behavior, library leaders can demystify leadership and management work through their interpersonal relationships and daily interactions with staff.

Modeling advocacy to and on behalf of one's staff builds trust and the buy-in necessary to successfully navigate the complexities and uncertainties of higher education. At a university, advocacy entails exploring what it means to serve as an academic librarian, where service is more distributed or even invisible in the virtual environment—as well as being seen as professionals and having a seat at the table. As she moved into administration, Kate recognized the importance of articulating the role of the library and librarians to external stakeholders. She recalled, "I am finding tension in the library's place in the university. We have expertise. We have a field. But we also have a service model in the academic environment." Kate encouraged her staff to carefully consider what their role meant within their university's organizational context. Navigating the politics of that role proved critical for Kate's sense of success as an administrator. Kate explained the interpersonal dynamics and sense of oneself within the library system were aspects she "would caution people to be careful of as they go forward in administration." In Kate's experience, advocating for her team directly related to the librarians' role and place within the university. Her understanding of librarians' role within that organizational culture gave her a more informed perspective through which to gain support.

PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Encouraging staff to become professionally engaged through research and publishing, network-building, and participating in professional associations is a critical piece of leadership and management development. One administrator underscored the benefit of engagement at the university, in the library, or outside and shared, "It's important to avail yourself of those—both for your own learning—but it also gives you opportunities to engage with other people at the institution, so it gets you out of the library space." Emerging leaders

draw tremendous empowerment from being able to participate and form networks through skill development and then apply leadership training as part of low-stakes learning opportunities. As someone who sought professional development opportunities to further develop his own skills, Tom encouraged his faculty and staff to understand and recognize the value of establishing professional networks, finding training, and being professionally engaged. In addition to the new perspectives gained through such programs, emerging leaders have the opportunity to step outside of their comfort zones and learn something new. When talking with his team about professional development, Tom said, "I encourage anyone who goes to a conference to go to one meeting that's totally outside of their current area to just explore and find out about it. For example, we just had the State Library Association Conference, and a couple of my librarians decided to go and hear about a book club for homeless students that's being offered through a public school system." As emphasized in the literature, library leaders should encourage faculty and staff to think creatively and holistically about the academic library's place within the university. Being able to make those connections is part of a leader's skill set.

Encouraging staff to think outside the silos of academic librarianship and to consider opportunities from a new perspective fosters the development of a learning organization. Tom explained the benefit of learning about initiatives outside of academic librarianship and said, "I will ask people, 'Okay, when you went to that conference, what was the one outside of your work area activity that you went to, and what did you learn from it?' I believe that we all play an important role to change our organizational culture and try to make them learning organizations." Providing funding for professional development is one key lesson learned. Providing the opportunity to apply that development in their academic library context was equally if not more important, as library leaders strive to develop learning organizations. Conferences and workshops are two ways to be professionally engaged.

Library leaders should emphasize the benefits of working with a mentor throughout one's career or during certain phases, which can provide much-needed support as another aspect of professional engagement. Learning from his own trepidation of asking someone in the field to serve as his mentor, Tom explained, "I encourage people to ask. I know a lot of people will say, 'Oh, that person is too busy. Who am I to ask that person to help me out, to try to be thinking about these things?' People are usually excited and flattered and will do it." By drawing on his own hesitancy to find a mentor, Tom addressed the anxiety members of his staff felt. When those mentoring relationships fail to meet the mentor or mentee's expectations, Tom explained he tries to mitigate that outcome: "I warn people that they need to put work into it. In order to really be mentored well, they need to be seriously thinking about what it is that they want, why they want it, and what might they want to give up because of it. Those are the types of questions that they should be talking about with their mentor." By considering gaps in his own professional network, Tom's advice included encouraging his staff to learn about those potential professional development and network-building opportunities. One's reflections about these questions naturally evolve over the course of a career. Building in time for reflection to consider one's needs is a necessary part of leadership development.

Similarities and Differences in Career Paths

PERSPECTIVE

Creating an organizational culture in which senior leaders and those working throughout the library value a variety of career paths—including those who pursue advancement and those who continue as practitioners—requires that administrators distinguish their own motivations from those of their staff members. Working in multiple institutions over the course of one's career impact a librarian's perspective on library work and advancement. Once in her role as AD, Kate observed a certain amount of stagnation in her colleagues. Few had worked in another library, and few had interest in advancing into management positions. Kate explained, "The people that work at this library are here because they want to be in this physical locality." For those practitioners who work in one library because of geographic proximity to family or to live in a desirable area, their perspective is more likely to be based on how work is done at that particular institution. As a result, recognizing the need for change and embracing change opportunities may prove difficult for such practitioners. Coaching emerging leaders and new managers to recognize the source of a colleague's resistance to change provides support. Coaching must also include encouraging a broader understanding of personal motivations, which differ from person to person and best foster an organizational culture where a variety of career pathways are valued.

Not all practitioners want to become leaders. As someone who considers herself to be internally motivated to assume leadership roles and make changes to move her library forward, Kate has had to recognize the difference between her career path and those of most of her staff: "They're doing good work. But I don't think they're focused on revolutionizing libraries. I don't think they're focused on changing the way we do things or coming up with brand new ideas. They provide good service to our students and our user population." Senior administrators should coach new managers and administrators to recognize the need and value of those practitioners providing the services Kate described. Kate found that while she enjoyed moving into new roles and working for different organizations, "a lot of people say, 'I really like what I do. I don't necessarily want to go and try new or different things.'" Getting to know one's staff and their interests in positional and non-positional leadership roles, or possible avenues of interest outside of their domain expertise, requires senior leaders to model supportive behavior, which demonstrate how they value all career paths.

Several participants underscored a generational divide they observed, in which newer librarians took on more initiatives, and experienced librarians relied on formal leadership structures to govern their work. Debbie observed such a dichotomy throughout her career, and after taking a moment to gather her thoughts, she shared, "I think there's some differences generationally. While I'm certainly not a millennial, I have held a few different jobs, and that's not something that some of my employees have experience with. There's the one job and you are in that job for thirty-five years. So that's been different." With the increasing number of contract positions, it often takes new librarians longer to find a full-time or a permanent position. As a result, they find themselves moving around more than previous generations of librarians. These moves impact their career trajectories and sense of belonging within an organization or the profession.

In addition to the length of time librarians remain in a particular job, *when* one enters library school impacts their perspective on the profession. Debbie reflected, "Some on my

team are really young, and they came to grad school right after college. I don't necessarily have a better perspective, but a different perspective. It reminds me to not be so jaded and so cynical, and know you can be optimistic and still be realistic." As the profession becomes increasingly professionalized, entering library school immediately or soon after finishing an undergraduate degree has become more common, unless entering the field as a second career. As someone who waited several years after finishing her undergraduate degree to enter a library science program, Debbie brought a more varied perspective to that master's program. Throughout her career in libraries, Debbie recognized differences between generations and career paths: "You have that dichotomy between the two types of workers, and it makes for a lot of tension in certain areas." Debbie found that to bridge the tension she focused the work on "being engaged with the populations you're serving, thinking critically about how you can improve services and opportunities for those people, and looking for opportunities to move forward," regardless of one's longevity within the organization. Library leaders should strive to value all career paths and what individuals—regardless of their position and ambitions—bring to the organization. In Debbie's experience, "people with the longest institutional knowledge are often the people with the narrowest range of work experiences." As Debbie's experience highlighted, the profession must continue to develop those interested in pursuing advanced positions as well as place value on the knowledge and influence those non-managers bring to academic libraries.

Recognizing the changing nature of leadership and management roles as articulated in the literature and job ads compels current and potential library leaders to develop alternative models to build profession-wide capacity to meet our leadership challenges. Given the growing complexity of higher education, Tom encouraged his colleagues to "to get out of your own environment and out of your own comfort zone and the little circle of people you always talk to" in order "to really understand the landscape of the profession and what is possible and developing your visioning skills." As he nears retirement, Tom reflected on the changing nature of academic libraries as it related to advancing into senior leadership positions. From his observations, Tom explained, one aspect "that I think is very different now in libraries than when I was coming up is that libraries were so much more hierarchical. I could go from a special collections curator to an assistant head to a unit head to a head of technical services, and that kind of opportunity to step up isn't there so much."

Library leaders should develop organizational cultures to foster non-hierarchical leadership opportunities regardless of position descriptions by developing alternative leadership models within their units, departments, and libraries. The growing emphasis on non-hierarchical work and cross-functional teams is a major difference between the experiences and career paths the participants described, and the kinds of opportunities they strive to create in their organizations. Drawing from their own experiences with informal leadership opportunities, participants described the benefits and drawbacks to providing those experiences for their direct reports. As Sarah emphasized, in a project or team-based approach to leadership, library leaders sought to replace traditional hierarchies with increased transparency and opportunities for employees across the organization. In response to that industry trend, Tom shared, "I really encourage people to take on leadership roles on projects or committees so that they get experience leading a group of people." Sarah recognized the challenges some staff experience with non-hierarchical leadership structures and said, "In a profession that primarily recognizes leadership from a hierarchical perspective and struggles

with different kinds of leadership . . . I'm exploring what that means" so employees do not feel as though they have "five hundred bosses because there's all these projects." All leadership and management staffing models have limitations.

Collaborative work and non-hierarchical structures can lead to frustration and a lack of strategic direction. Traditional hierarchies limit the numbers and backgrounds of potential leaders seeking to develop their skills and gain experiences. Articulating transparent expectations and time limits on projects or leadership opportunities for emerging leaders fosters skill development and capacity-building across the organization. Working with practitioners to reflect during pause points and create a career ladder to scaffold skill development provides opportunities to meet the needs of individuals rather than generalize about how one becomes a leader and assumes a leadership role. Alternative leadership models enable library leaders to work with their staffs to develop leadership and management skills and apply those new skills in a low-stakes context. A goal for our profession must be to create models that combine leadership opportunities for staff *and* the infrastructure to support those opportunities.

COMPETENCY

As more job descriptions indicate a preference for or, in select cases, a requirement of a terminal degree, librarians interested in advancing will need to consider how such a degree may set them apart from other candidates. When considering skill development and career paths, several participants commented on the qualifications that their staffs have and the professional development opportunities they have sought. Many librarians enter the field with multiple master's degrees. From conversations with her team, few librarians expressed interest in pursuing a terminal degree, as Sarah chose to do. As she coached her staff, Sarah noticed, "I've had to have conversations with folks as to, 'Why would you want to go work at such-and-such institution when you don't have this degree, when it clearly states in the job description that they prefer someone with the degree?'" Pursuing a terminal degree represents another identity shift for library leaders, as senior-level positions pull them further away from library work and their portfolios more closely resemble that of other university administrators. It is therefore understandable, when coupled with the impact of pursuing those programs in tandem with work/life responsibilities, that some would be hesitant to enroll. Pursuing a terminal degree is one pathway to convey a set of competencies desired by future employers when hiring for senior-level administrators. Library leaders must engage with the profession about the place of those programs within one's career path and consider where in one's leadership development such a program might fit.

Recognizing different learning styles and skill gaps, library leaders should encourage their staffs to pursue training and development to meet their needs and aspirations. In addition to the academic backgrounds of her team, Sarah has noticed a difference between her professional network and training and those of her staff. As a technologist, Sarah focused on developing job-related skills and forming professional networks that supported her work. With more breadth in her portfolio, Sarah has observed that for some librarians with a focus on technology, those staff members "experience a degree of marginalization because they attend a whole different set of conferences or have a completely different set of ideas around research. So, whatever I do, it's with different communities." The professional

development opportunities Sarah pursued also differed from her staff. Many of her younger staff members sought leadership development training in advance of formal leadership and management roles. Although Sarah has had that experience, she preferred informal training opportunities. As Sarah explained, “It doesn’t provide everything, and from my perspective, it presents one very narrow piece of that leadership pie. I certainly learned a ton, but it’s not my chosen way to show or advance leadership.” The profession must not limit opportunities to only formal leadership skill development.

Constructing career ladders to scaffold skill development in recognition and support of a variety of career pathways is a critical part of closing the leadership gap. Similar to her own skill development, Sarah’s staff found opportunities to address their needs: “It can be a hodge-podge where people are putting that patchwork of things together for themselves without any formal program, then sharing it with each other.” Library leaders should encourage and support their staffs to pursue training opportunities based on their needs and learning styles.

Gaining competencies and having opportunities to apply those skills in formal and informal ways is another difference between current library leaders and the next generation of potential leaders. As someone who was thrown into management, Tom found he has “had a pretty standard path coming up through an entry-level position into an assistant department head role, doing that for several years, and then working as a department head, so that by the time I was ready to look at AD positions, I could check a lot of boxes. I’m not an outlier in the profession in too many ways.” Unlike his staff, Tom progressed through a hierarchy, which he did not believe existed any longer. At larger research universities, there is a growing trend of flattening organizations, partly in recognition of non-hierarchical leadership models. Compensating informal leadership opportunities would reverse the dynamic some experience in which “it’s harder at an ARL to pay your dues and move forward because if you pay your dues, you look good, and you tend to get taken for granted.” Putting herself in the administration’s shoes, Kate asked, “Why would we move this person up? We already have this person” who is a high-performer in a particular role. For those not working at a research library, Kate has observed it can be “harder even though it seems like there’s more opportunity to move in a straight line up. I feel like there’s a lot more opportunity moving to the side if you’re a truly ambitious person.” Moving to the side speaks to the increasing number of libraries providing non-hierarchical leadership opportunities for staff based on individuals’ competencies and administrators’ desire to build capacity within the organization. As he considered the career path of his faculty and staff, as well as those whom he knows at other libraries, Tom explained, “It’s interesting to look around and see who moves up the ladder and why because people don’t seem to be able to steadily advance within one institution.” Regardless of the institution’s profile, the library profession should consider how internal opportunities shape the career paths of those motivated to advance into leadership roles.

Leadership Skill Development Opportunities

FORMAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

For those librarians working at institutions with professional development funds, they can avail themselves of formal programs. For those without such financial support, the

profession and individual institutions need to consider how to provide low- or no-cost opportunities—which hiring managers equally value—to best foster leadership skill development among practitioners to broaden the pool of qualified candidates. Working with her staff to find internal and external opportunities through programs and stretch assignments that best met their professional development needs and learning styles were two approaches Debbie applied to provide her team with leadership training. Debbie began, “I started a book group and I bring in speakers. People apply for it, and I take eleven people per year, and we meet every month for two hours. If you go through those chapters, there’s a chapter on HR, there’s a chapter on budget. What’s important is they get the context of these readings.” These books then become sources practitioners can go back to as their careers evolve. As the literature and participants’ experiences underscore, being familiar with leadership and management theory is a critical part of development. Furthermore, a book club builds a cohort within the library, who can then support one another throughout their careers. They develop a similar vocabulary for talking and thinking about leadership and management, which builds capacity throughout the organization.

Debbie explained how this reading group not only provided valuable context of key leadership and management ideas, “It allows me to know the staff on a different level than I normally would, because being an associate dean, you don’t always get to work with everyone. Now I have new working relationships with these eleven people, and afterward, if I see an opportunity, I’m constantly remembering, oh, this is something that X person might be interested in.” Working closely with staff from across the libraries enabled Debbie to learn more about their interests, potential gaps, and opportunities to apply the theory they learned or training they participated in. These internal programs provide a strong foundation for skill development throughout one’s career. When creating pause points for reflection and career ladders for scaffolding skill development, library administrators must recognize opportunities for such growth and foster a culture of growth within the organization.

Building a network within and outside of the library provides a valuable support system for emerging leaders. As Debbie advanced, she encouraged members of her team to develop a similar support system. In addition to library-related training, Debbie found leadership training opportunities for her staff on campus, which broadened their networks beyond librarians. There was “a Leadership Development Institute that was systemwide, a Business Officer Institute that I’ve sent department heads to, and there was a Management Skills Assessment program.” Taking advantage of programs offered on campus provide emerging leaders with new perspectives of leadership and management topics that are different from participating in a library-focused program. Similar to Sarah’s informal and formal approaches for developing leadership skills, Debbie, too, takes a broad view of such development. She explained, “Anything that helps people to think about leadership in the broadest sense, not just library leadership, will help them to develop leadership skills.” In the increasingly complex higher education environment, engaging with colleagues from across campus through these programs fosters collaboration and increases opportunities to advocate for the library.

Unlike the training and network-building previous generations of library leaders participated in, when considering opportunities for the next generation, administrators encourage their staffs to participate in formal programs as a key component of networking. Debbie

found when her team participated in such training, “they can be very powerful because folks get to go away and interact with a cohort that aren’t their work colleagues, which is an important element to leadership development.” Applying learned skills and theories within a low-stakes environment is a key component of any career ladder. Similar to the skills Debbie applied when serving in leadership roles through a professional association, she felt greater freedom to develop her own skills and experiment during those experiences than she did back at her home institution. Debbie shared, “You have to have a safe space to explore topics and themes to build your confidence, and that’s hard to do with your co-workers because it may not feel safe to share what you feel, or your gaps. But to share that with other professionals who are not from your own workplace can be very powerful. It also helps you to build that network.” Library leaders need to provide support for their staffs to engage in development through a variety of programs offered through different organizations to present a plurality of options for leadership skill development as part of pathways into leadership positions.

In addition to applying learned skills and theories outside of the organization through participation in professional associations, library leaders must determine what kinds of leadership experiences they can offer within the library. Ongoing conversations about career goals and aspirations enabled Debbie to both find leadership training opportunities and to develop projects where her staff could apply the skills they had learned. As Debbie found with her own skill development, having hands-on experience enabled her to expand and further build her skill set. The opportunities she created ranged from short-term assignments to permanent position changes. Rooted in those changes was the understanding Debbie had about each person’s interests and positionality within the organization determined through conversations, observations, and assessing opportunities. She described:

I have tried to give people what I’ll call stretch assignments to step into leadership roles before they have an opportunity to formally apply for a supervisory or managerial job. One example is, an assistant department head came to me and I learned that she really wanted to be a department head but she didn’t want to leave the institution, and she knew her boss wasn’t going anywhere. About six months later, we had an opportunity for a cataloging grant and we needed someone to manage it. I was able to suggest her. We took fifty percent of her time and made her the head of this cataloging grant project, and it enabled her to supervise a team of five. Then she kept the other part of her job and some of her responsibilities were shifted so she could focus on this grant. After her supervisor and an AD talked to her, she came to my office and she had this look of sheer surprise and pleasure on her face and she said, “I have you to thank for this.” And I said, “Well, this is where it’s helpful for me to know what your career goals are.” That gave her just enough experience in managing her own department. You can do that by having someone do an interim assignment. Looking for opportunities for people to stretch their skill sets and test things out.

Managers should think creatively about how term-limited projects and other lower stakes responsibilities can foster confidence and provide the experience necessary to advance into permanent leadership roles. In addition to the confidence an emerging leader develops as a result, they also learn how formal leadership and management positions may or may not

fit within their career trajectory. Administrators gain new perspectives on the abilities and interests of one of their employees, which further fosters a supportive culture.

SUPPORT

Once in a department head or AD position, library leaders' identities shift again as their work moves further away from that of practitioner to that of facilitator. Coaching new administrators through this shift is a critical part of leadership development. Emulating similar structures of support she received as a new leader and manager, Kate described the culture she helped to implement to provide her team with similar opportunities to develop leadership skills. Kate reflected, "I see myself as a facilitator. If someone comes to me with an idea they want to do, it's up to me to clear the roadblocks and make it so they can get through." In order for librarians to feel comfortable sharing an idea with their supervisor, libraries must develop as learning organizations, which encourage experimentation and risk-taking.

Administrators should work with their staffs to balance institutional needs with personal drive and interests to keep everyone engaged. One of the systems Kate created to help clear those roadblocks was the idea proposal. She excitedly explained, "It's a one-pager, which asks, 'What problem are you solving? Why solve it now? What questions do you have about it?' Just to capture it that day, you know?" The form compelled library staff to consider the necessity and urgency of the problem they wanted to address. Since anyone in the library—no matter where they sit in the organizational hierarchy—could submit an idea proposal, each staff member had the opportunity to lead a project based on their own interests and the library's needs. Kate described one such proposal in which the staff member had explained, "'Gosh, what if I could spend three months just digging into the collections I'm responsible for and how they connect to rare books to figure out what pieces the teaching faculty in my area should know about?' That's a really good idea. I want to be able to say, 'Yeah, you should. Tell us how it goes so that we can take that learning to others.'" Providing structures and support for a project is one component of alternative leadership models.

Encouraging practitioners to also share what they have learned and how it might impact the library or profession is a critical part of creating alternative leadership models and opportunities for emerging leaders. In Kate's assessment of the idea program, she found, "It's working, and I want to see more. I want to be inundated with these ideas because everybody has that much power in the organization." Kate personally experienced the sense of empowerment that came with leadership and project management work early in her career. Positive leadership and management experiences—even when the project fails—begets confidence and results in a culture where empowering others becomes part of the organization's fabric.

The second piece of supporting others was to leverage those experiences to foster the creation of a learning organization. The key components of a learning organization, as participants described it, included encouraging reasonable risk-taking, assessing initiatives, defining next steps, and reflecting on the process. Kate encouraged staff to consider the success and failure points of their work to further develop leadership and management skills. She confessed, "I love talking about things after they didn't work and breaking it down. It's

one thing to say, ‘Oh, that was terrible and didn’t work,’ and then not do anything about it. That drives me nuts. So, I really like to make changes.” Taking the time to explore the good, bad, and the ugly of a project builds confidence and a spirit of experimentation within a team. Further, such processes dispel the misperception that leaders have all the answers. Kate led her team through a series of reflective questions to pull apart the project outcomes. She asked them, “‘Okay, what happened? Why didn’t this go the way we wanted it to? Is the way we wanted it to go unrealistic? And should this be considered successful?’ Reflecting and thinking, ‘How can we have changed this?’ or ‘How can we have done it better?’ and then actively making those changes.” In Kate’s experience, the iterative nature of project management in libraries demanded this kind of reflective approach. In addition to this project-based model, there exist opportunities throughout one’s career to consider past performance, next steps, and needs.

In addition to the informal and formal conversations library leaders have with their staffs about professional development needs and finding opportunities throughout the year, such conversations should also take place at the time of tenure or promotion. Tom used this point as an opportunity to talk about future growth with his faculty members and asking them about their post-tenure interests. He explained, “The associate deans here work with everyone directly as they go through the tenure process. We administer the process. We mentor them through the preparation of their dossier every year, and then we act as a first-level reviewer. It’s really hands-on, and it’s good from that perspective of getting to know what their interests are.” With the hurdle of the tenure process behind them, faculty librarians will have more time available to assume leadership and management responsibilities. The post-tenure year would be one natural point in a librarian’s career to work with her supervisor and create a new game plan that potentially leads to more advanced responsibilities or roles. For those librarians without faculty status, supervisors and library administrators should model a similar system with opportunities brought about through changes in rank or vacant positions as pause points to reflect on one’s leadership trajectory.

TENSIONS

There is no one career ladder or leadership trajectory that fits every person and every library. Throughout one’s career, individual motivations and aspirations change. There exists a tension between wanting to provide leadership and management training and the possible negative impact in the future, either for the staff member or the organization should that person become overloaded or decide to find a job elsewhere. In Sarah’s experience, although she strove to provide such opportunities, she acknowledged part of her role involved “dialing that back, saying, ‘I really feel like you’re doing too much here.’ And ‘How can I help get some of these things off your plate?’ And ‘How do I help you say no, sometimes?’” Sarah also wrestled with the real possibility of investing time and financial resources in a staff member, who then chose to leave the organization. Sarah explained, “Leadership development has a good side and a bad side to it because you develop leaders, and, frankly, in some cases, they leave.” In order to grow the available pool of candidates for senior leadership roles, administrators must accept that the librarians, whom they have invested in, may leave the organization. Library leaders should model the positive results associated with one of their staff members pursuing a new position elsewhere to demonstrate the value placed on

a variety of career paths and the overarching benefit to the profession, which occurs when a leader brings her training and skills to a new organization.

Succession Planning

Succession planning provides library leaders with a way to build the leadership and management skill capacity within their organization to help ensure the library continues to move forward as positions become vacant due to retirements and employees leaving the library. For those with longevity in an organization, their institutional knowledge is a vital component of such training, which eases the transition for remaining staff members. Turnover also provides a natural opportunity to explore alternative leadership and management models by appointing people into interim roles, developing dual-management structures, or shifting a unit into a different administrator's portfolio.

PLANNING

For those participants who felt their libraries had a succession plan, the majority developed the plan in response to an institutional mandate or initiative. Within those initiatives, there were formal and informal approaches. At Kate's liberal arts college, the small size of her institution impacted the kind of long-term planning she worked on: "Unfortunately, the professional development is often geared toward someone leaving, and now everyone has to learn how to do this thing." The typical impetus within an organization is to respond rather than anticipate the gap. At the time of the interview, Kate's college was in the early stages of developing a succession plan. She described the progress she had observed: "I don't know how it's going to go. I hope it's successful. I hope people develop this renewed energy about their role and strengthen their commitment to what they're doing." Succession planning enables librarians to envision their work as part of the broader educational enterprise through such campus-wide processes. For libraries developing succession plans internally, such planning provides another pause point within one's leadership development to assess an individual's interests in leadership and management skill growth and related library roles.

Librarians feel similar tensions related to succession planning as those related to talent retention. Kate viewed succession planning as part of a broader staffing model or organizational structure change within her library. Similar to the tension Sarah described, Kate expressed:

We hire people with the expectation we want them to be here forever. I think that's half the problem. The profession can't succession plan if we don't allow people to build themselves to the point where they leave. Our research services department had taken that approach. But no, you don't have to be in that job forever. Get some skills, look awesome on your CV, and move on. It's okay. I think we should expect it and be proud of it.

The changing nature of library jobs and universities decreases the likelihood that a librarian's first job or tasks will be the same as their last. Individual libraries need to consider how they responsibly invest and develop their staff with the expectation that some may choose

to continue their careers elsewhere. To build morale, organizational leaders should model feelings of pride when discussing departing staff members who have developed their skills and are pursuing new positions elsewhere. Kate explained the programs she and her team have implemented to facilitate succession planning which “may have helped with skills, but a lot more of it shows we value your learning experience.” Similar to the appreciation she felt as a newer librarian whose supervisor provided her with leadership opportunities, Kate saw it is part of her responsibility to do the same as part of staff development and succession planning for the library. As a profession, the more we can do to foster feelings of self-empowerment and belonging within the field, the better prepared we will be to address leadership vacancies.

NOTHING FORMAL

A number of participants described informal succession planning, mostly executed by the senior administrators. Debbie explained, “I guess we do. The senior management team is certainly looking at developing people as managers. I’ve done a lot with our department heads across the library. We have transitioned people from one role into another.” Without institutional mandates or policies, library leaders must develop personal commitments and investments in others’ development as part of succession planning. Debbie focused on where individual staff could move up, and she encouraged them “to think more broadly about contributing to the overall management. You’re responsible for the success of the whole organization, not just making sure that certain collections are cataloged.” Helping practitioners make the mind-shift from solely that of domain expert to a contributor to the broader organization fosters skill development, leads to greater buy-in, feelings of connection with the library’s priorities, and value within the organization.

Providing librarians with opportunities to try on leadership roles while a supervisor is on vacation or away at a conference is an informal approach to succession planning. Similar to a practice-based approach she took when developing her own leadership and management skills, part of Debbie’s way of succession planning was to provide others with similar experience while she was out of the office. Debbie explained, “I’ll work with someone to be me. I tell them these are the things I’m expecting to come in while I’m away. Then we debrief when I come back.” Such short-term leadership opportunities enable potential library leaders to try on management responsibilities in a low-stakes context. Providing time after the experience to discuss what went well or could have gone better provides the emerging leader with support and an opportunity for skill development. As Debbie described the practice of leadership, “Sometimes the only way that you can learn it is just to be there, let the fire hit you, and do the best you can, knowing that I’m just a phone call away.” Perhaps more so than any training session, providing such low-stakes opportunities for members of a team to try their hand at being an administrator offers an important glimpse into the day-to-day work those roles entail. In addition to the ability to try out a leadership role, promoting those with the necessary skills into advanced positions is another aspect of succession planning.

Promoting library leaders into positions within one library system at a university is an alternative leadership model. For those library leaders working at institutions with multiple libraries, they can support the career development of their staffs while recognizing the benefits of applying talents within one university but at a different library within the

system. From Debbie's perspective, staff advancing into more senior roles in other libraries on campus was an informal approach to succession planning. She shared, "We do like to promote from within. Our workforce is shrinking. When a position becomes vacant, it's not always necessarily going to be filled as is, or at all. We have to grow leaders within." Building capacity within a library system enables administrators to respond to budget realities, which limits available resources while ensuring there are qualified leaders and managers. Branch libraries offer benefits to emerging leaders as well. Such positions provide librarians opportunities to advance without relocating, which is attractive to many.

PROCESS FOCUSED

For library leaders with policies and pressures at their institutions to post all job ads, developing a succession plan becomes complicated. As someone working at a large, public R1 university, Tom commented, "I don't believe in succession planning in higher education. I've seen it happen where they don't get the position, and there's repercussions for that. They feel betrayed. They feel lied to. If you're going to post positions, it should be a real process." In light of these institutional policies, library leaders must create career pathways emphasizing informal leadership opportunities and encourage their staff to apply for permanent positions as they become available. Library leaders should work within institutional structures and connect priorities with individuals' development. Tom explained how strategic planning provides such opportunities: "We develop the skills that are important in the organization for now, and in support of our strategic directions through our action planning cycle. They identify either positions, skills, or responsibilities we need. The more you bring skill development into the organization, the better. I really try to avoid talking about it as succession planning." Skill building, an organizational needs assessment, and action plans become important processes for informal succession planning. Preserving the legitimacy of a national search process while considering career pathways for librarians within their organizations remains a tension. As a profession, we must become more nimble in anticipation of the changing nature of higher education by opening a variety of paths through which librarians can explore leadership positions as part of informal and formal succession planning as well as process-oriented approaches.

Uncertain budget cycles limit a library's proactive planning abilities. Coming out of a hiring freeze the previous month, Sarah explained that her library had less than three months to onboard ten new employees in senior positions once a hiring freeze had been lifted. Being unable to anticipate the library's ability to fill vacancies and plan for future positions makes succession planning unrealistic. As a result, Sarah shared, "The issue the university is facing at this point is retrenchment rather than succession planning. There are positions being left vacant at the most senior of levels, where people leave who have been in those positions for decades. There is a lot of change that's underway that is not strategic planning-driven and is reactionary." By not being cognizant of the kinds of institutional and organizational priorities Tom described, Sarah felt unable to most effectively advocate for her team and provide growth opportunities.

In response to constraining budget cycles, library administrators should consider how to demonstrate that they value their staff members who assume additional duties by providing compensation, whether by offering flexible time, schedules, a one-time salary bonus, or

professional development funding. Sarah stated, “Our biggest expense and also our biggest asset is staff. Making decisions that bring in the best-qualified staff at the expense of those who have been at the institution for many years is short-sighted. Succession planning also has to be aligned with retention planning.” The implications of decreasing state and private funds allocated to higher education continue to play a major role in retaining and filling vacancies, within and beyond the library doors. The dual focus of succession and retention planning in some ways mirrored Tom’s emphasis on skill development and conducting a needs assessment. To maintain healthy library organizational cultures and provide career paths for staff, a combination of the strategies described here are necessary. Succession and retention planning ensure that more staff members remain engaged and feel supported to grow and develop within the institutional realities of the current higher education landscape.

Self-Identifying an Interest in Leadership and Management Skills Development

PUTTING SEEDS

Library leaders must employ a variety of strategies to help librarians see themselves as potential leaders. Providing indirect but intentional ways of encouraging their employees to self-identify an interest in developing leadership and management skills and eventually pursuing advanced positions is one approach. Once they self-identified their interests, participants sought to provide opportunities to facilitate the staffs’ development. Debbie shared a story about a librarian who had had one negative project management experience that held her back from proposing other initiatives, and she encouraged the librarian to try again. Debbie recalled, “Sometimes it’s just putting seeds into their brains, which is what I’m trying to do with this librarian because I think she has it. It’s just that she has never seen herself in that light.” Supervisors should work with their staffs to create career ladders to further develop their leadership potential and related skills.

Debbie felt it was her responsibility to encourage her staff to begin to see themselves as leaders by presenting opportunities and training. It was through those opportunities her team could begin to self-identify their interests. Debbie explained, “I’m pretty sure there were people at University Library who would not have sought out the kind of opportunities they got if no one had said to them, ‘We think you’re the right person. We would support your application, or we really would like you to step into this interim role. I know it’s scary, but you’re ready. You can do it. We’re here for you.’” Supervisors should work with individuals to provide increasingly more complex learning opportunities to meet emerging leaders where they are in their skill development. Coaching relationships provide support for new leaders, especially for those who suffer from imposter syndrome and have difficulty seeing themselves as leaders ready for the next step.

Modeling the realities of work experiences characteristic of advanced positions addresses part of the current leadership gap in academic libraries. Similar to the kind of support Debbie remembered receiving early in her own career, she believed it was part of her role as a senior administrator to provide support mechanisms for her team. Debbie described her approach, in part, as one that relied on having “an open door, trying to engage people in the kind of decision-making leaders have to do. And making sure that there are opportunities for people to share perspectives and understand that their perspectives are valued.” Such

an active approach to leadership development demystifies the realities of leadership and management roles. Dialogs provide opportunities to exchange ideas and challenges regardless of one's place within an organizational hierarchy. Thinking further, Debbie reflected:

It's important to encourage people to step up and get involved. It does involve saying the same thing over and over every day. And part of that has to do with building trust. I think most folks who have worked in the profession for decades have been the victims of dysfunctional management. Not to disparage the previous generation of librarian leadership, I think it has to do with the fact that training in these questions was never any institutional priority, anywhere, until quite recently. People got into a position that they weren't prepared for and failed. But encouraging and re-encouraging and re-re-encouraging absolves us from staff—whatever position they're in to take on new responsibilities or work in new ways, both within the institution and with their peers.

Fostering a profession-wide focus on leadership skill development, academic libraries have reached a turning point. The profession requires a broad and varied development system, where supervisors work with individuals to scaffold skill development and experiment with leadership opportunities. Rather than accept the possibility that new managers may still find themselves thrown into those roles, instead, supervisors need to actively provide opportunities for skill development and then push and encourage their staff members to consider themselves for those opportunities.

Using a coach approach to foster skill development and ease the transition from identifying as a practitioner to leader/practitioner is a critical role for supervisors to play. Debbie underscored the importance of early leadership wins and the impact those successes can have. She explained, "I think it's very easy for people who have experienced success in leadership roles to say if people want it, they'll ask for it. Obviously, that's not always true. If someone does express interest, I want to nurture that as much as possible and give them opportunities." Mitigating feelings of imposter syndrome through support, encouragement, and skill-based training to demonstrate to potential leaders the iterative nature of leadership development so they do not feel like, as Debbie quoted one of her staff, "I asked for that and I was turned down so I must not have what it takes" because that's very rarely the case." Debbie acknowledged the limited leadership and management skills some librarians may have. There remains a perception in the field that leaders are born and not made, or there exists a leadership formula to ensure success. In her experience, "if someone has an interest and can get the encouragement, I wouldn't say just anyone can do this work, but more people should realize they are quite capable." To build a cohort of leaders within subsequent generations of librarians, such a development-based approach to leadership skills will be crucial to ensure the profession has capable and interested practitioners to assume these advanced roles.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Developing a supportive organizational culture at the unit or department level through which supervisors work with their staffs to self-identify their interests is a second component. Thinking about the department Kate managed, leadership and management discussion

and skill development “was just in the ether. We were all talking about it all the time. As it was largely a matter of getting to know people and then making them aware of an opportunity that’s coming up.” Applying the soft skills they learned earlier in their careers to listen to others, ask open-ended questions, develop goals, and build strong interpersonal relationships, managers can best support their staffs as they enter their own leadership journeys. Kate described methods within her library she used to provide her team with the opportunity to self-identify their interests.

Similar to their role removing barriers to facilitate work outcomes, supervisors are uniquely positioned to remove barriers to skill development and leadership practice. As Kate phrased it, “I just let them do it. I encourage each person within what they do to take ownership and look for opportunities to lead others in their area. I ask—a lot.” Freedom to explore opportunities, taking ownership of those opportunities, and frequent conversations were three approaches Kate used to provide her team the support to self-identify their interests. Supervisors must articulate the value each member of their staff brings to the organization as well as provide formal and informal learning opportunities for skill development. Kate personally experienced the benefits that came with the freedom to explore opportunities when she implemented various outreach programs as an early career librarian. As an administrator, Kate felt “my main job is finding out what they want to do and help them do it.” Building strong interpersonal relationships and supporting individuals’ aspirations based in part on the institution’s priorities fosters such a supportive environment.

Facilitating others’ leadership development also requires addressing the identity shift that results from assuming advanced responsibilities. As someone who enjoys leadership growth and development, Kate found it has “been discouraging for me that not everyone wants to be a leader. I offer that opportunity to everybody, but not everybody wants it. I need to be okay if I offer it and the person says, ‘Nope, I’m good. I’m just going to do my thing here and I’m fine.’” In order for academic libraries to be successful organizations, administrators should develop formal and informal leaders as well as engaged practitioners at all levels. Building career ladders with skill development for all staff keeps the organization engaged and motivated to do good work, which moves the library forward, regardless of how leadership and management responsibilities play into their roles.

The organizational culture in Sarah’s library fostered an approach to leadership skill development using non-positional authority to provide staff members with opportunities. When the administration created a project team, “we do an open call for at least one of the slots there. Sometimes you have very specific needs that are required for a project.” By opening up the call for participation, library leaders can discover people’s previously unknown interests in an area of librarianship. In Sarah’s experience, the open call kept her staff engaged with changes taking place throughout the library. She encouraged her staff to put their names forward when the administration created project teams to further develop their own knowledge base and to contribute to organization-wide efforts. Sarah recognized there were limits to the benefits of an open-call approach for participation. She explained, “It’s a challenge for us when someone wants to do something radically different. But if we can be a little bit flexible,” people feel the freedom to explore their interests. As a result, they will get involved with a project outside of their original domain expertise to learn something new and to make a broader contribution through a cross-departmental project, or as part of assuming leadership and management responsibilities. Taking a

project-based approach enables staff to self-identify their interests and, equally important, the opportunity to explore those interests within specific time bounds to continue to fill the expectations of their job and to meet the organization's need. Librarians then have to take that initiative and speak up.

SPEAKING UP

Administrators must rely on their staff members to speak up and express their interest. Identifying as potential leaders will not feel comfortable to some librarians who do not already see themselves as having the necessary skills to be successful in those roles. Tom believed within his library that the administration did a good job of supporting those interests, once expressed. Tom shared, "We encourage everybody to pay attention to the listserv, and volunteer with things and get involved. Could I do a better job of pushing out more information about things? Possibly to probably. But there's certainly a 'culture of yes' surrounding things people come up with." Tom's response indicated there may be more he could be doing to support his staff and their interests to further foster the "culture of yes" he identified. When thinking about the impact self-motivation and personal advocacy has had on his staff, he reflected, "I hope there's a sense that we support people wanting to do stuff." Unlike Kate and Debbie, Tom's primary method for providing his team with ways of self-identifying their interests was largely based on indirect approaches, with less one-on-one conversations and feedback. Supervisors need to use tools and methods based on the personalities and backgrounds of their staff members. No one approach will work for everyone.

Demystifying pathways into leadership is a critical way of addressing the leadership gap in academic libraries. Without intentionality—whether through formal or informal programs—we risk missing opportunities to support particular librarians who may never be comfortable raising their hands when offered leadership opportunities. Reflecting on the stereotypical introverted personalities of librarians, and recognizing not all librarians may be comfortable speaking up and expressing an interest in developing leadership and management skills and experiences, Tom said, "I think that is probably a discredit to our profession. We could do a much better job of developing people that aren't explicitly looking to be developed or explicitly vocal about being developed." However, Tom believed the individual must be open to those opportunities and, ideally, be willing to speak up. Such an approach relies on the librarian feeling confident about her interests in advancing her skill set as well as the receptiveness of the listener. Not all librarians find themselves working in a supportive and growth-minded organization. For those who do, Tom felt, "If you are somebody who is more quietly ambitious, you have to approach your superior and say, 'Hey I'm interested in advancing. What skills do I need to advance either here or somewhere else? How do I get those opportunities?' You really need to kind of take the reins and own it because otherwise you just have to be lucky, and liked, or maybe have certain traditional advantages." Tom's use of the word "lucky" suggested that previous generations of library leaders—himself included—believed their success depended less on their skills and more on traditional advantages white men receive in our culture.

Our society entrusts leadership and management roles to white men, more so than women or underrepresented groups. We cannot expect members of those groups to

automatically see themselves as potential leaders and managers or feel comfortable speaking up to self-identify their interests. Tom's comments emphasized the default practices library administrators may rely on when fostering leadership development: personal relationships and societal norms. These methods keep the pool of possible leaders small and create a more insular professional culture. Relying on societal norms reinforces notions of those who make effective leaders: white men. To combat the insular and societal norms impacting the field, individuals, organizations, and the profession more broadly must develop systems to ensure that a variety of pathways become available for librarians to enter into leadership positions.

Impact on the Organization

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Encouraging skill development throughout the library successfully builds leadership capacity. The organization draws upon the domain expertise of individuals while expanding their knowledge base to include leadership and management skills needed to be effective contributors within the broader context of higher education. From Kate's perspective, "The more people you get involved, the more creative and successful the outcome will be. There are many talented people in the organization. These opportunities lead to a better thought-out result." Supervisors should encourage all staff to consider how they might further develop themselves, regardless of their position or title. Based on her personal experience with project management and non-hierarchical leadership opportunities, Kate felt, "Giving people leadership opportunities that are not necessarily tied with management is something I'm interested in. How do you motivate people to get them to see pathways that aren't about money? Not that money is the only motivator, but it causes us to make decisions in our life that maybe aren't necessarily best for the person." Supervisors should recognize money as one motivator, but not the only one. Breaking down our complex organizational systems and structures to understand various sources of motivation enable a library to compensate its staff in a variety of ways, beginning with having a voice and being able to make an impact.

Opportunities to apply learned skills in their current positions provides librarians with the chance to determine whether advancement—within or at a different library—is of interest to them. Similar to Tom's comments about the tension between providing leadership training opportunities and the reality of staff choosing to apply those skills elsewhere, Kate also acknowledged the challenges she faced when staff leave. She helped her staff to learn more about themselves and their career goals through conversations. Kate has experienced resistance from some senior administrators and has heard: "There is sometimes the tendency that you want to support people so far, but not take the next step to support them so they can go elsewhere if they choose to. Or take the next step and understand that they may opt to go somewhere else if they feel that opportunity is there." As someone who actively sought advancement and relocated for new positions, Kate understood the inevitability that once they developed necessary skills, some people would move on to positions at other libraries. Kate reflected, "People come and go, and that's part of the nature of the organization." Part of organizational growth requires bringing in new ideas by hiring new people, at the same time as administrators value the institutional knowledge gained from those working in the same organization. Valuing both new ideas and institutional knowledge foster a learning organization where leaders encourage skill development and individual contributions.

APPLICATION OF SKILLS

Library leaders must recognize the benefits to the organization as a result of providing non-hierarchical leadership opportunities. The open call for participation that Sarah's library used was rooted in the idea: "We want good leaders developed . . . and then to give them other opportunities, even if they're not positional opportunities. Ask them to chair search committees or to lead some of our strategic initiatives. We don't want the same usual suspects." Issuing and broadening calls for participation builds capacity within the organization of those who can lead, feel comfortable with serving in leadership roles, make positive contributions to teams, and understand library work holistically. Most of the participants discussed the importance of being able to apply learned skills in the organization. When thinking about her own employees, Sarah underscored, "It results in a more confident manager. Everything someone does to build their knowledge base and improve their skill set and develop their understanding" results in them feeling "a bit more confident, more comfortable in their role, which I think plays out in the organization by making them more successful." Rather than focus on finding team leaders who only have a specific domain expertise, Sarah sought to provide opportunities for staff to apply their leadership and management skills who might not be the experts in a particular area of librarianship. She shared, "We really need to get away from some of that mindset of librarian as sole expert." Applying leadership and management skills in the short-term through opportunities provides meaningful and tangible leadership and management experience for practitioners, which benefits the library over time.

One impact of team-led initiatives can lead staff to feel overwhelmed by all of the opportunities they have to participate in and grow their skill set. In addition to managing their day-to-day work, Sarah shared her observation: "There's a pull between different things. What is your job as a librarian daily? There's working with students, the campus, and the professional service that's expected." These competing priorities could have a negative impact on librarians' interest in applying their skills and seeking leadership roles. Sarah expressed the concern: "I feel people are decently engaged in the mission of the libraries, but sometimes we don't get the time to step back and do the things that we need to do for ourselves professionally." Developing time for reflection as part of scaffolding skills within the framework of a career ladder alleviates overloading potential library leaders, and it should allow for meaningful reflection about one's career goals and interests and how serving in particular ways furthers one's development.

CULTURE SHIFT

Managers have the ability to affect culture shifts within their own departments, which then impact the organization by implementing specific structures and systems designed to foster leadership skill development and interest. Kate described the kind of shift she was trying to implement with her fellow ADs. In Kate's experience, a culture shift required transparency and an environment where "people need to be seen and heard. In big organizations, a lot of people get a little bit ignored." Managers should build on previous successes developing a learning mindset within their departments, which then leads to broader leadership development. In order to bring such a shift about, "interpersonal skills are very important for building team communication and celebrating their successes and planning new things."

Bringing about a culture shift requires applying soft skills. Kate explained the importance of developing a flexible and mindful communication style, which took time and attention. She reflected, “Managers can get formulaic because managing people is so challenging that you just want to learn and follow the handbook, but it’s actually a lot of emotional labor, and no one teaches you how to do that.” Individuals within organizations need to educate one another about the emotional work management requires through honest dialog, and setting realistic expectations for both supervisors and staff.

Similar to the complementary strengths of the project teams in her libraries that Sarah described, Kate explained bringing about a positive culture shift required shared commitment and involvement throughout the library administration. She shared, “My group of ADs are very can-do ladies, and we’ve tried to see what we can change in the culture from our positions. For us, it was an increase in internal communication, setting up weekly emails for the whole organization so people could feel they knew what was going on.” Changing the organizational culture of her library required clear communication to make staff aware of initiatives, as well as leadership and management opportunities to foster the kind of environment where staff believed they could be leaders at any level of the organization. No one person can bring about a culture shift, but when senior leaders make culture change a priority, an organizational commitment to leadership and management development can be the result.

Drawing on the leadership skills of different people within the organization is an important component necessary for a library to overcome the challenges associated with bringing about a culture shift. Kate explained, “You are a band and you need to figure out who plays what in the band and play to your strengths.” Senior leaders should foster a nimbleness in their approach to implementing a leadership development mindset and culture in their organizations. An institutional shift toward transparency and a receptiveness to new opportunities provides the supportive environment necessary for skill development. As Kate reflected on the current cultural climate of her library, she said their progress became more apparent when talking with prospective employees. While she considered the long-term impact of the cultural shift as “yet to be seen,” Kate recognized the differences between the old and new cultural norms. One job candidate commented the organization appeared “as a pot about to boil over. That’s a change. It was so gratifying. That’s what the hope is, that there’s a sense that we want to stay open because things change and other opportunities exist.” Maintaining a culture shift will have an impact not only on one organization, but when shared through research, publishing, and presenting, impacts the profession more broadly.

Impact on the Profession

LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

Creating career ladders and leadership pause points leads to an industry-wide shift toward intentional leadership and management development. The profession benefits from individual contributions and organizational commitments to fostering a leadership development mindset. Many participants described providing or developing pathways for those interested in pursuing leadership and management roles. One administrator reflected, “There are many pipeline programs and focusing on how do you impact the profession down the road. I think the more you can do to get people thinking about opportunities, it does open the

door for more people to self-identify to want to go on that path.” Kate foresaw a positive impact on the profession over time as more librarians develop leadership and management skills, apply their learning, and become interested in serving as leaders and managers. She explained, “It would help us bring new innovations to the library profession—if people are able to identify needs they want to fill.” The more individual supervisors and organizations commit to providing leadership development opportunities, the smaller the leadership gap in the profession becomes. Subsequent generations will become better prepared to take on increased responsibilities as part of a profession-wide movement to support a variety of career pathways.

Using his own experience as a guide, Tom advocates for long-term change in the profession rooted in “breaking down those skills into their smallest constituent points and building people toward leadership.” That kind of gradual introduction to leadership and management will have a greater impact on the profession than what he experienced, which “in retrospect, I think it’s shocking that somebody gets dropped into their first real leadership opportunity as a department head. That’s a dangerous thing. People can be harmed by mistakes that everyone’s going to make.” Instead, Tom imagined contributing to a process where managers “on-ramp people into leadership.” From his experience as both a first-time manager and from his perspective as an administrator, creating an on-ramp for newer librarians would best serve the profession. Tom believed such a gradual approach “can help create more well-rounded leaders and help people understand whether leadership is even something they want to do. There are other ways to be powerful in the profession, and there should be. We need to make paths for that.” Echoing his earlier statements about compensation and motivation, Tom foresaw various power sources for individuals to tap into in order to make a contribution to their organization and the profession. These multiple on-ramps will have the greatest long-term impact.

Crafting position descriptions when vacancies occur is a second approach to incorporate leadership development opportunities industry-wide. As Kate considered how to fill vacancies for those on her team who have talked about retiring, she explained a growing trend: “They’re not liaison positions that are being replaced. They’re going to coordinator positions that require working with teams of people across disciplines and across units.” Coordinator positions require working across library departments and breaking down hierarchical management structures, teaching collaboration skills, which professionals then invest back into the field through professional engagement or when joining a new organization. When thinking about the profession and the impact those sorts of job trends will have, in connection with the skill development work Kate does with her team, she recognized a possible profession-wide culture shift. Even in her own library, committed as it is to that kind of leadership development, Kate explained, “We work within our own little disciplines.” In order for the profession to successfully make this transition, potential library leaders should reflect on what they need to be successful in order to move into those advanced roles. Current administrators must then provide training and opportunities to apply the newly learned skills as well as support for unsuccessful leadership experiences. The profession as a whole needs to provide support and training, where needed, to facilitate such transitions into and out of leadership and management roles.

Creating a leadership pipeline for the profession would require intentionality and an industry-wide commitment. Such practice would also need to address the existing

dichotomy in the field, which Tom phrased as, “There are many leaders in the profession who don’t know how to be leaders, and then managers in the profession who don’t know how to be managers. It’s easy to blame them. It’s easy to have an anti-administration stance. But the truth is those are human beings who are doing their best and who may not have had enough experiences to know how to wield power, how not to, and how to bring people along or how to listen.” Career ladders that scaffold skill development help to address such gaps. Providing support from supervisors and colleagues also fosters leadership skill development. Despite generational differences in leadership styles, accidental leaders and managers may persist in the future. Tom’s reminder that managers are still human beings doing their best will always hold true. The profession and individual organizations need to make room for those like Kate and others interested in bringing about change and taking an active leadership approach.

Every one of us faces the daunting task of preparing the next generation of library leaders. In addition to the positive impact Kate imagined for the library profession, she also expressed doubts about the plausibility of establishing a leadership pathway for librarians interested in advancing. On her less optimistic days, she has to contend with conflicting thoughts: “There’s stuff that I wish we would all change and move forward. But I know that’s not going change unless a bunch of people retire. I know it has been ever thus for decades.” We must establish an industry-wide commitment to encourage, support, and motivate potential library leaders to enter into advanced roles. Kate strove to remain true to her own ethics and commitment to developing others as leaders. She explained, “I believe every organization has an obligation to build our next generation. It takes a village to raise a librarian. It starts here in my library.” Libraries need to commit organizational resources to support development. The cost of formal programs is out of reach for some libraries. It behooves the profession to examine funding models to encourage maximum participation of potential library leaders in formal and informal training programs.

PROBLEM SOLVERS

By establishing a leadership pipeline, the profession creates a generation of librarians that has the skill sets to solve the big problems of our profession from either a traditional leadership position or in a non-hierarchical role. Sarah commented on the micro and macro implications leadership development may have in the future. Speaking of the micro impact, she explained at her institution librarians do not participate in instructional design. However, as a result of training and strategic planning, Sarah hopes to see a change as faculty begin to look to at them “more as partners in teaching and learning versus someone who comes in and just teaches tools.” Using skill development to reframe how librarians position themselves within the higher education landscape pays huge dividends in the future as more and more universities seek to provide value-added learning opportunities for those undergraduate and graduate students. Librarians, Sarah said, must be prepared to ask the big questions:

What’s going on in higher education? How do new technologies get integrated into what we’re doing? What’s going on with scholarly communication? There are so many large issues that I think it’s very easy to overlook if you just stay narrowly focused

on your own little operational part of the library world. If we don't have people who are part of a larger conversation, it concerns me that libraries will become very unimportant parts of communities.

As Sarah emphasized, librarians could play a key role in that kind of curriculum development and transformation of higher education. Rather than only thought of and valued as service providers, librarians—with the right skill set and application of that skill set—become more active participants in the knowledge-creation cycle. As a result, librarians change how they think about themselves, their roles, and value within higher education. Such transformations begin with individuals, academic libraries, and, finally, a profession-wide commitment to leadership and management development.

Social justice issues demand thoughtful practitioners leading organizations. As Kate offered, “Well, here’s hoping that librarianship becomes a little less white. I’m hoping this training can help us recruit students to be student workers and then encourage them to go on into the profession. Many librarians are committed to social justice issues and diversity issues, and yet we can’t seem to solve that problem within our own profession.” Few participants commented on issues of diversity until the conversation turned to how these kinds of leadership and management skill development opportunities may impact the profession. Kate imagined the next generation of librarian leaders as the group who may have the tools—both the social justice framework and leadership and management skills—to fully address the lack of diversity in our profession. Kate explained that by developing these kinds of leaders, “it’s a chance to get people in there who are going to say, ‘This is a problem. How can we fix this?’ Get involved. So it’s a huge boon for the profession. I wish we could support people who are really good at being leaders who wanted to do it, and get them involved.” Certainly, addressing societal challenges requires non-hierarchical leadership and mind shifts to enable librarians to see themselves as problem-solvers.

ESTABLISH A NETWORK OF LEADERS

Networks impact individual skill development and also have a strong impact on the profession’s ability to engage a new generation of potential library leaders. When considering the impact different programs or training have on the profession, many participants spoke of the diverse network these individuals could create and the positive impact. Debbie shared, “It builds a network of people that support each other and have shared experiences. When people have positive experiences in leadership institutes, workshops, or within professional organizations, where they have an opportunity to be in a leadership role, it broadens their perspective.” Debbie expressed concern about the decreasing funds available across academic libraries to participate in professional development. Having experienced firsthand the positive benefits of learning from those outside of her organization, Debbie worried that future generations of librarians may not have that opportunity. Engagement “prevents our profession from becoming too narrowly focused on each of our little home institutions.” A broader perspective positively impacts the individual and, when considered collectively, positively impacts the profession. A profession and professional associations must be the places where individuals come together to solve problems that impact the

entire field. Association officers and industry leaders should consider how to create time and space for such dialogs to demonstrate at the macro level the impact leadership can have.

One possible solution to this challenge would be to start with considering how practitioners form their networks. Despite her best efforts, Debbie believes the profession will not be able to see the full impact of the kind of investment many organizations are making in leadership and management skill-building until they can slow down to provide more opportunities for those who come from diverse backgrounds. She reflected, "Particularly when you're busy and you don't necessarily have the time to rigorously look for every possible person to do something, you fall back on the people you know." Debbie's career path led her to build a diverse network that enabled her to provide opportunities to a broader group of individuals. As she explained, "If the people you know represent a diverse cross-section of the population, that's great. Then you're going to extend opportunities to present, publish, be on committees, and provide professional development." Encouraging practitioners to see themselves as leaders through mentoring and networking is a second critical piece to address the lack of diversity in academic libraries.

Through network-building, librarians have the opportunity to learn from others who may be of a different race, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic, or educational background. Debbie shared, "It's critically important that people be exposed to as many possible voices as they can as it relates to planning for the future and implementing change in our organizations. That goes for people in positions of library leadership as well." In Debbie's experience, professional engagement exposed her to different types of people whom she would not have interacted with otherwise. Expanding one's network also leads to economic diversity within professional organizations. Debbie commented on the graduated dues structure of ALA, which "encourages participation in the profession from those at all rungs of the economic ladder." From an administrative perspective, Debbie felt it a manager's responsibility to "consciously and intentionally connect conversations about increasing diversity" with the practicality of finding librarians to serve on a professional committee or as part of a team within the library. Though broadening the pool of available talent to access potential leadership and management opportunities would not in and of itself solve the lack of diversity in our profession, it might help us to broaden our perception of who we think of as possible leaders to more mindfully include those librarians from a variety of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Both the issues of race and gender play a huge role in the development of a leadership pipeline in the profession. Partially the individual's responsibility and partially the administration's responsibility, attracting a diverse pool of candidates remains a challenge for our profession. The process of opening up the profession to recruit candidates from diverse racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds starts with writing job descriptions that celebrate an inclusive culture. Considering gender and race issues when filling positions, particularly at the senior-level, Debbie shared a comment made by a male colleague of hers: "It's closer to a fifty/fifty split between men and women in the field, but men—white males like me—tend to move into administration very quickly." Debbie's colleague observed that when filling senior positions, men were far more likely to apply for jobs, despite not having all of the preferred qualifications, yet women were far less likely. Referring more to diversity with respect to race, Debbie commented, "There's not a lot of guidance for writing your job description and where you share your job description" to ensure a diverse pool of candidates.

Working through professional associations and affinity groups or non-library entities to examine word choice with respect to required and preferred skills is a necessary component of broadening the pool of possible applicants for leadership and management positions.



A leadership culture must be nurtured at the individual, organizational, and profession-wide levels. Regardless of one's interest in pursuing leadership and management skill development or seeking advanced positions, we need to provide support for a variety of career trajectories, while creating pathways into leadership. Current library leaders must build on their own experiences gained through formal and informal training and opportunities to apply their skills as part of a leadership career ladder. Throughout one's career, supervisors, coaches, and mentors should discuss with potential library leaders the place skill development and advanced positions have within their career goals. Succession planning offers opportunities for library leaders to consider how they foster an organizational culture of learning within their libraries. In order for the training and skill development described here to make a positive impact in the long-term for the profession, more managers must consider not only how to offer opportunities for their employees to broaden their networks but also how they can take a proactive approach to network building to ensure greater diversity and inclusion across the profession as opportunities to lead and serve arise.

Career Aspirations

“The joke back in library school was that as a male in the profession you would end up as a director, and we all laughed about it. But I guess it’s semi-true. Do I still feel like I’m heading in that direction? Probably. So it’s just, what is the right opportunity? For leadership positions, there’s a sense you need to be a distinguished scholar, which in my opinion has nothing to do with being an administrator. It is frustrating when I see director and dean positions that want you to have a PhD, to be innovative and exciting, full of ideas, have lots of experience managing projects. Those things seem completely different to me. And when I think about things that senior administrators at the dean/director level have to deal with, it’s a lot of external relationships and fundraising and stuff like that, which is not something you learn in library school or even as a middle-level manager. I don’t know how places expect people to have all of these skills. And if those people exist, good luck to them.”

“Future career aspirations. At some point, I’d like to be an ARL director. I guess it doesn’t really matter if it’s an ARL. I’m starting to feel more and more that life balance matters. I had always worked near family. This is the first time we don’t work and live near family. I’m game to look at other things. I really, really love it here, so I’d like to see how things go for a while. I wish I would’ve come here a few positions ago. These AD jobs aren’t sustainable if you want to be a director because you can’t stay in them forever. There’s a shelf life for how long you can do this unless you’re just going to do it forever. There’s nothing wrong with that. There’s a shelf life for how long something like the ARL fellows program keeps you in the loop. To think of going from being an AD, even with a big portfolio and a lot of experience, to being a dean at a place like here. It most likely means moving on. I never really thought about that. I feel like I’m hitting way above my batting average here. I think I’ve made good connections here at the university and the libraries. I feel like people trust me and I have a high level of trust for the people around me. I guess my only concern is sustainability.”

To close the leadership gap, the profession must support and encourage those in middle management and senior-level positions to assume roles as library deans. Similar to the importance of coaching practitioners to explore their interest in leadership and management early on in their careers, so too should senior-level administrators spend time coaching ADs to consider their career aspirations.

PURSUING DEAN POSITIONS

Being able to envision oneself in a dean position facilitates a leader's ability to chart the course to get her there. About 40 percent of participants shared that they see themselves pursuing dean positions in the future. Some participants, like Sarah, knew the specific steps they would take to be ready. With a big smile on her face, Sarah explained, "Oh, absolutely! I am studying educational leadership with a higher education focus. My goals for the program are to become a better scholarly writer and to develop a research agenda. I'm going to be looking at deanships and directorships, but not until I finish all of my coursework. I'm all in." Deciding to pursue an advanced degree proved to be a difficult choice for Sarah. Now that she has committed to such a program, she wanted to see it through to completion. Sarah understood that by earning such a credential, she may be a more attractive candidate for a dean position. As Sarah said:

One of my career paths forward is to become a dean at another university. And I'm willing to move out of state. But I have learned because of experience I'm going to be working those Carnegie classifications. I *don't* want to work at an R1. I don't want to go to an it'sy-bitsy small school, and I don't want to go to a private institution. We're midwesterners, so I probably will stay between the Rockies and the Appalachians. I don't really see myself being a coastal person.

Similar to the idea of fit that Tom and others described when encouraging their staff members to consider pursuing advanced roles, Sarah carefully thought about what role and at what type of institution she would be most comfortable. In addition to institutional fit, Sarah had a family to consider, and she wanted to continue living in the Midwest to remain close to them.

For those newer to their assistant dean roles, it may be harder to see themselves becoming library deans, although they may have that aspiration. Deans should coach ADs to ensure they continue to develop their skills to best prepare them for even more senior-level positions. As the quotations at the beginning of this chapter indicate, there is no one perfect career path from which to assume senior-level positions. Each library leader must develop those aspirations for herself. As someone fairly new to her assistant dean role, Kate saw herself eventually moving into a dean position but did not have the same kind of specific plan as Sarah. When responding, Kate first paused and then shared, "I guess I see myself moving up. I wouldn't mind being a dean at some point. I'm definitely not ready for that now. But I could see ten years or so, applying for a dean position." For someone like Kate, her dean should engage her in conversations about her evolving career aspirations. These conversations will also uncover potential skill deficiencies, which once addressed will further prepare ADs to become deans.

Using reflection through pause points throughout one's career to identify skill gaps, other needs, and possible intermediary positions before the role of dean create a leadership pipeline into these senior roles. In the coming years, Kate intended to focus on fleshing out her skills and getting a broader range of administrative experiences under her belt to then prepare her for a future leadership position. The next step in Kate's career would be to move up to an "associate dean's position and supervise more faculty. Because that is a completely

different realm than supervising staff. They have all of the complicated tenure issues.” In addition to learning how to successfully manage library faculty, Kate also expressed a need for more budget management experience. The third skills area Kate wanted to address was fundraising. She explained, “I’ve done some work with our friends’ groups, but a lot of ‘dean-ly’ work is fundraising.” Encouraging their ADs to work alongside them, deans play a critical role in demystifying the place of donor relations within an administrator’s portfolio, which is an important part of preparing the next generation of library deans.

Imposter syndrome impacts what kind of institution ADs see themselves leading. Kate shared, “I think a medium-sized or smaller. I would *not* want to work at an R1 institution. I think that’s just way too big for me. There’s way too many levels of bureaucracy to have to get through. That would not be my strong suit.” Not all administrators feel a connection to working as part of a complex and large research institution. The profession needs to guard against potential candidates deciding not to apply solely because they feel their skills are not strong enough to match the large size of the university. The majority of participants either said explicitly they did not see themselves in dean positions in ARLs or did not specify the institutional profile. ARLs may experience greater difficulty filling their senior-level positions in the coming years as those deans retire. The ARL Leadership Fellows program offers a pipeline to mitigate this possibility as participating in the program positions library leaders to be recruited as potential candidates for dean positions, as the quotation at the beginning of this chapter indicates.

UNCERTAIN

Similar to the identity crisis they experienced moving from practitioner to manager and then manager to administrator, becoming a library dean leads to another identity shift. One of the main differences with the shift to library dean is the change from an inward focus on facilitating library work to the increased focus on building external relationships to best advocate for the library. About 50 percent of participants expressed uncertainty as to whether they wanted to advance to become a library dean or director. Their reasons fell mainly into three categories: enjoyment of their current role, perceptions of the role of being a dean, and interest in pursuing other possible career avenues.

Kate shared some of her own misgivings and those of her friend, Amy, who came up through libraries in special collections at the same time as her. Speaking for her own experience, Kate said, “I feel like I’m in my dream job currently, and I want to do this job for five or ten more years.” When considering why she would want to remain as an assistant dean, Kate explained, “I love the materials that I work with so much.” In addition to the nuts and bolts of overseeing user services, Kate shared the enjoyment she got out of the direct contact with her staff: “I like the interaction with my department heads. There are parts of the dean’s job that appeal to me, but not all of it. If you are in that senior leadership role, you have to be willing to embrace all of it. In some ways, I’m a little bit better in a second-in-command role.” Library deans need to share the benefits and drawbacks to having an external focus. Appealing to ADs’ interest in supporting their departments will help senior leaders see the impact they can have on a larger scale by shifting their work to a focus on external stakeholders and advocating for the library at a higher level.

Part of demystifying deans' work also requires honest dialog about the shift that takes place from having a peer group in the library (true of most of one's career) to having an external peer group or constituency. Deans no longer have a peer group within their organization; rather, those relationships develop among administrators across campus. Speaking with her friend and colleague, Amy, who expressed a desire to remain in her position as an associate dean, she shared with Kate, "For my entire career, I've wanted to be in the senior leadership, with the eventual idea that, 'Oh, I'd love to be the director.' I try to bring together the operational excellence, professional forward-thinking, and enjoy working with the community. But the further I go, I wonder if maybe number two isn't the sweet spot for me because it's a whole new ballgame when you start reporting to a provost." No longer identifying as a librarian, and instead finding peers outside of the library, compels library leaders to find new sources of support, job satisfaction, and once again they experience a change in their sense of themselves as library practitioners.

Choosing to assume an externally focused position requires a shift in one's mindset. Amy explained to Kate, "You are necessarily external in a way that people internally don't understand because your peers are your fellow deans and you're reporting out. I love the work that we do in libraries. You have to decide whether you're an advocate *within* the library for library work or whether you're an advocate to others outside the library. And I'm struggling with that." As Amy emphasized, when ADs consider their career aspirations, they should reflect on how a shift to an external rather than an internal focus will impact themselves professionally. Being an advocate necessitates working with a variety of stakeholders, including legislators. For ADs working at public universities, they observe increasingly challenging budget negotiations. The political climate in many states may not be one that always supports higher education, which limits the available resources for libraries. As a dean, one must directly engage with these issues, which an AD can more easily avoid.

Meeting new challenges continues to motivate senior leaders, as did those opportunities earlier in their careers. When considering what a move up to a dean position would entail, Kate expressed uncertainty and said, "This institution has been such a good place for me." Over the next five to ten years, Kate saw herself further developing her skills and growing her team. Given the challenges of librarianship in higher education, Kate explained the changing nature of the work was "sufficiently varied and dynamic that your job might be the same position in five years but you're going to be doing radically different things. I don't think I'll ever get bored." Being in an AD role enabled Kate to maintain and explore her intellectual curiosities. As she explained, "I've got lots of time with lots of work left, as I tell my mom. The work has to be compelling and interesting for me, and I wouldn't hesitate to leave a position that wasn't helping me learn or that I was ill-suited for. I can feel subtle growth happening, so I just want to keep meeting new challenges for a while before I think about going any higher." Interest in experiencing new challenges remains a motivation for administrators, as it did early in their careers. Encouraging ADs to see the opportunities available through dean positions is a necessary component of closing the leadership gap in libraries.

Continuing to demystify leadership roles is a second piece. When Kate was job hunting, she looked for possible models who would explain the role of being a dean. Kate described her relationship with her dean and said, "I really wanted to have an opportunity to see the work of a library dean up close. I think he's getting used to me asking questions like, 'Tell

me, what does it actually look like to do so much fundraising? What does that look like on a day-to-day basis? How late do you have to stay in order to wine and dine these prospective donors?" By asking their dean questions, ADs will begin to separate misperceptions they have about that position from the realities of the work. In addition to working with their deans to see firsthand what that work entailed, ADs may also find serving on the search committee when the library is hiring a dean to be useful. Both of those experiences would provide a window into what skills search committees look for when hiring as well as the daily realities of the position once filled.

Understanding the impact of a senior-level portfolio on work/life balance is another component of demystifying the role of dean. Librarians experience shifts in their work/life balance over the course of their careers. The outward-facing nature of dean positions demand participating in events and programs before or after the traditional workday, as well as on weekends. Women continue to serve as the primary caretakers of young children and elder parents, which may have a greater impact on their interest in assuming such a position. Having a young family gave Kate pause when considering if she wanted to eventually assume a position as dean. Kate explained, "I'm certainly not ruling that out, but it does seem to be a job that is almost entirely incompatible with having children." Working with the university's Human Resources department to develop policies to better support caretakers is a needed to help close the leadership gap. Institutional services and structures that offer daycare on campus, flexible scheduling, or different healthcare plans would ensure employees feel supported throughout their careers as their needs and work/life balance change.

Dual-career households further complicate work/life balance, especially if both partners work in higher education. When considering his career aspirations, Tom paused and then responded, "Finding a place that is going to have a home for two people is not always going to be easy." Thinking about becoming a dean, Tom expressed doubts about whether he would even be interested in taking that step if he and his wife could both find appointments. He reflected, "I certainly enjoy many aspects of being an administrator, but I don't know anymore if I want to take a step further and go into the position of a dean. In part, it's the location that I'm in, which is a wonderful place to live. I think that it would probably mean moving if I did want to pursue being a dean." Deciding to move to a new organization to move up into administration is a common decision point in many librarians' careers. As senior leaders advance, their care needs change as they age, and those decisions remain important, but the deciding factors shift. Regardless of one's stage of life, institutional fit and profile remain deciding criteria when determining the next steps in one's career and aspirations.

As someone who has passed the midpoint of his career, Tom observed the benefits of professional engagement and educational opportunities. Drawing from his own experience that did not always include those opportunities, Tom felt a push to provide that support to those working outside of his institution. Tom explained the appeal of pursuing a next step outside of academic libraries: "Sometimes I wonder if there are other roles I might want to play in the library profession, with library education or something else. I hope that I could offer something as an educator or a mentor to those students to help develop the next generation of librarians." Leaving academic libraries to work in library education or for a professional association would be a departure from a more traditional librarian career path. Tom explained that while he sought advancement in academic libraries, he also saw

a need to expand his reach in light of the current challenges facing higher education. Tom explained, “There’s going to be a lot of turmoil in the coming years, I’m afraid. We’re going to need leadership skills at all levels, and we ought to be focusing on how to build those skill sets among people regardless of what positions they are in. I’d like to see more library leaders.” Aspiring to become an administrator within a professional association underscores the importance of developing transferable leadership skills, which can prepare a practitioner to apply their skills at different types of organizations.

Moving outside of an academic library position provides the opportunity for a library leader to affect change on a broader scale. Tom did not rule out the possibility of moving up within academic libraries or possibly into university administration. Tom reflected on his career to date and said, “I never saw it going here, so I have no idea. I don’t see myself leaving an administrative role.” He also considered how his skill set might fit with a position in university administration. One of Tom’s colleagues recommended a position at a smaller institution, but Tom felt “that pulls me too far away from the libraries.” Similar to the split participants described as they entered into management roles earlier in their careers, Tom’s hesitancy signified another possible turning point. As the quotation at the beginning of this chapter indicates, participants felt a disconnect between their roles as administrators and the emphasis in job postings for the scholar/administrator. The administrator function would map to positions outside of libraries, as Tom’s colleague emphasized when she described a vice president for academic affairs position. Providing multiple paths for the next generation of potential library leaders should also include meaningful consideration of the career trajectories of upper administrators. Their ability to impact change may not solely reside in becoming a dean, but also working for a professional association or elsewhere within higher education to advocate for academic libraries.

RETIREMENT

Depending on one’s career trajectory, administrators will reach retirement age and be ready to exit the profession before they feel prepared to become library deans. Regardless of age, one’s commitment to innovate and having an interest in moving an organization forward must be the main drivers for assuming senior leadership roles. Debbie shared her decision not to pursue becoming a dean and explained, “At some point, consciously or unconsciously, I made a decision that I have advanced as far as I’m going to advance. I really believe that if I were going to have been a dean of libraries, I probably would have had to leave and go to a different organization, in a different state. For personal reasons, I decided

“I wish I would have thought about leadership. I think a lot of librarians don’t think about it. One, because of the type of personalities attracted to it, but I also think it has to do with gender. A lot of times women aren’t encouraged to be leaders. That’s often what leads to leadership or lack of leadership in libraries because women haven’t been taught those skills. Someone just said to me, ‘I think you can do this.’ That kind of lack of lifting up in leadership.”

—Kristen, library dean

that wasn't going to happen. I'm very happy with what I've accomplished and am looking forward to doing something else."

It is important to consider the connection of age with feelings of imposter syndrome, similar to the impact of gender, race, and socioeconomic status on one's sense of self. Age is one factor leading potential candidates away from pursuing dean positions. Debbie shared, "Well, I'm old. A couple of years ago, I had to realize that my career should no longer be about building my career, but my career should be about building others' careers." Debbie chose to spend her final working years developing others. She felt it was her responsibility to provide the same kind of support she received as an early career librarian to the next generation of library leaders. Work/life balance, family needs, and cost of living were several reasons Debbie gave that led her to remain in her position. Anticipating retirement, Debbie reflected, "At this point, the most I probably will have is another ten years in the profession. Once I get my daughter settled financially, I would like to be able to retire and to move wherever it is that she moves for work, and let that be the end of my library career." With this plan in mind, Debbie will retire from her current position in her late sixties. Within those ten years, someone at Debbie's stage of career certainly could become a library dean. To close the leadership gap, we must expand our preconceived notions of who becomes a senior leader, especially as librarians are working later in life than ever before.

Motivation

IMPACT

Similar to their motivation for initially pursuing leadership and management positions, those interested in becoming deans are motivated by the impact they will have on their organization. When coaching ADs, deans should emphasize the broader impact senior administrators can have on library work and the university to connect with potential leaders' strong desire to make a difference. As a member of Generation X, Sarah saw herself as part of the next cohort who would become library deans.

Seeing their value shift away from facilitating library work to driving the direction of the organization provides deans with a new sense of personal value within the university. Responsible for crafting and articulating the vision of their organizations, deans can enact change on a large scale. Sarah shared, "It's the upgraded version of being interested in an associate dean position. It's being involved in the future of higher education conversation and having a leadership voice in the bigger picture issues." In many ways, becoming a library dean shifts the emphasis of their work back to service—providing support for the research and learning missions of their universities—much as they did when first entering the field. The critical difference is the indirect, rather than direct, ways library deans most often impact their users—in Sarah's opinion, having a bigger impact related primarily to enhancing the student experience. She explained, "I care that students get a good education and if they come to the library that it's a good experience for them—that the library helps them become better students, learn, and improve their lives so that when they leave here, they become a successful person." Current deans need to share their experiences having both a direct and indirect impact on students' success to connect with ADs' commitment to service, an initial source of motivation in their careers.

Making a difference to support student success requires library leaders to be able to advocate for their needs when speaking with university administrators. Having served as an assistant dean for a few years, Sarah observed the kind of impact the dean could have on the library and university. Sarah perceived that role as being a positive force within the university. She shared, “Would I love having to meet with the provost and the other deans? No. But I do know how to run a library and the people and the systems and the budget within it.” Sarah’s comments underscored the tension between having a day-to-day

impact on student success and the external advocacy that work requires. Similar to the decision points she and other participants described about their entry into management roles, becoming a dean would be another decision point and turn away from the daily practice of librarianship.

Library deans should describe their own role by sharing their personal decisions, which led them to pursue dean positions, as well as stories of struggles and successes, which are critical parts of providing motivation and fostering interest and will ensure there are qualified candidates to pursue advancement. When asked what interested her about making the jump to dean, Kate smiled and said, “I love making positive change. I really believe in libraries. It makes me sad sometimes when I see some libraries and how *far* back they are. I think with the right leadership and the right vision, there’s great opportunity for us to bring those libraries along to the twenty-first century and to look at the library as a different place, which is really exciting and energizing.”

Connected to the advice librarians receive earlier in their careers of running toward a new opportunity, rather than running away from a less desirable situation, ADs must find their motivation rooted in the positive impact they could have on an organization. Imagining herself as dean, Sarah shared, “I don’t want to move up because I’m frustrated with the leadership that I have right now, or I feel like I could do better. It’s just that, gosh, at some point, Gen X people are going to have to be in charge of stuff.” Similar to previous generational shifts in the workforce, there exists a tension between those in the baby boomer generation and Generation X. As one cohort exits the profession, the other prepares to replace them. The demographic data indicates that library deans remain or first enter into that role later in life than in previous generations. That longevity will impact the potential for members of Generation X to assume those roles and may impact their motivation to do so in the long-term.¹⁰⁴ Current library deans, and the profession as a whole, need to nurture ADs’ drive to ensure when vacancies occur; there is a pool of qualified and interested candidates to apply for dean positions.

“There will continue to be opportunities to innovate and change and for the library to support student learning in new ways. As a library director, it’s given me the opportunity to be exposed to more of the issues that shape our institution at large. I see opportunities for me to make a positive change.”

—Rachel, library director

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS

Describing their personal motivation to pursue a library dean position uncovers feelings of imposter syndrome for most ADs. Unlike their previous experiences moving into positions with greater responsibilities, aspiring to be a library dean is just that—aspirational. Library leaders, much like potential library leaders, remain unaware of their level of preparedness and potential for success until they enter those roles.

Thinking about her career path, Kate reflected, “I think I still struggle to see . . . my whole career was the ‘woo girl’ on the side with the weird project. I still have that conception of myself.” Though referring to gender, “woo girl” can easily be substituted for a nontraditionally accepted leadership demographic: race, age, or socio-economic status. To ensure that qualified and diverse candidates pursue dean positions when they become available, the profession must encourage practitioners to broaden their image of what a leader looks like to best support those motivated to assume advanced roles. Kate continued and, chuckling, asked, “The idea of the woo girl on the side being in charge of things is like, really? Do you want to see where this goes because, you know, it could be a little weird? It could go a little funny. But it’ll be fun though.” Despite being library leaders, those administrators from non-traditional leadership backgrounds and career paths or those who advance quickly feel isolated or “on the sidelines” and will not see themselves as ready to lead an organization without support from colleagues. To be successful as dean, Kate explained, “I might be a tad bit democratic and hippie, but I do think there’s a role for really good human organization and developing a workplace that people are interested in and happy to come to.” Wanting to develop healthy organizations reflects back to practitioners’ initial motivations to enter into leadership and management positions. Being able to see oneself as a library dean is one internal factor impacting personal motivation.

A second factor impacting motivation is our society’s negative depictions of personal ambitions. Kate shared her hesitancy with “going public.” She relied on her mentors and colleagues for support as she advanced in her career. Kate continued to struggle with being open about her ambitions and goals. As she explained, “It’s *okay* to have ambitions and be public about that. The reason that I was hesitant is that moving up seems so far away. I’d really have to pay my dues. And I saw people who desired to go from being department head to AD being talked about in particularly unsupportive ways, which I found sort of curious. There was almost a negativity around ambition in libraries.” Individual leaders, and the profession more broadly, must wipe out the negative associations people have with personal ambition. We need to value all career paths and respect those who seek to advance as well as those who seek to work as practitioners.

From the first quotation at the beginning of this chapter, women are the targets of this unsupportive behavior, whereas our profession assumes men will eventually find themselves working as deans. Deans and colleagues should model supportive behavior and remind those with similar ambitions to remain optimistic and persevere. Kate said, “If you are ambitious, if you are confident, if you are a little bit reckless, and unafraid of possible consequences. Hopefully, you’re in a healthy organization. How bad can the consequences be?” To ensure the profession develops individuals interested in advancing into senior positions, we need to consider how we celebrate and support those who do seek to pursue those positions. If newer administrators, like Kate, do not feel supported to “go public” about her ambitions, she may not choose to apply for such positions. Given the female-dominated

demographics of the profession, we must create a pipeline to support and encourage *both* women and men to advance.

Just as library leaders need to demystify leadership and management roles, so too should they discuss the responsibilities of being a dean. Understanding the duties associated with the position of dean may help ADs feel more comfortable articulating their ambitions. When considering her interest, Kate shared, “Frankly, some aspects of it just terrify me, and I don’t yet have some of the maturity to see myself doing it. I still like having someone to look up to, though I need it a little bit less every year.” Developing a career ladder with pause points will make library leaders aware of their skill gaps. Opportunities to stretch themselves will help administrators begin to see themselves as ready to become deans. Male participants did not talk about their maturity or about interpersonal relationship fears as deterrents for pursuing a dean position. They did speak of their hesitancy to assume such an all-encompassing position. Tom explained from his observations, “I have this idea that you give your whole life to it if you do that. It’s imagining this loss of yourself as a private person.” Deans should be forthcoming about the time they spend working—both in the office and after hours—to prepare potential candidates for the impact that position has on one’s personal life. Kate’s hesitancy stemmed from perceptions of herself as a dean. She explained, “Knowing you’re so high-profile that people will have really intense ideas about you and what you stand for. And the fear of being widely hated or just being under scrutiny from so many stakeholders.” Dean positions are naturally more public-facing than other library roles, as so much of their time involves donor relations and representing the library to external entities. Sharing with ADs how to manage public scrutiny is a necessary soft skill for such an administrative role.

In addition to humility, our profession must provide informal and formal opportunities to develop the self-confidence needed in administrative roles. Unlike the self-doubts Kate expressed, Sarah indicated a persistent self-confidence throughout her career that inspired her to continue to advance. Working in IT provided Sarah with opportunities to lead projects early on in her career, which gave her experience with decision-making, problem-solving, and building teams. She reflected, “I liked being in the role where I could be the what-if person, then actually be able to effect that change, and not just say, ‘Oh well, they would never let us do that.’” As more libraries use team structures to do daily and project-based work, more librarians have opportunities to assume leadership roles, which prepares them for formal positions later in their careers. As Sarah explained, “I enjoy strategy. I like talking about what we do at libraries. I always saw myself as moving continuously into higher responsibilities, whereas I’ve known plenty of people who stopped at a certain place and they’re happy there, and that’s great. I just have not yet been satisfied with where I was or where I am.” Considering her strengths and the possible impact she could have on her library and university motivated Sarah to continue advancing. Working with ADs and emerging leaders through formal and informal methods to develop confidence and humility are crucial traits needed of our leaders.

Emphasizing the human qualities deans possess is another critical discussion point. As Kate explained, “At first, I was like, ‘university librarians are superheroes and they’re untouchable,’ and some of them are, but they’re also just people. Struggling away.” Providing a job shadow program for department heads and assistant deans, similar to the site visit component of the ARL Leadership Fellows program, offers a sustainable approach for

demystifying dean positions. Working alongside a dean on a specific project, similar to early internships many librarians participate in, fosters interest in assuming senior leadership positions as participants would observe first-hand the demands and realities of that role.

In addition to internal factors impacting motivation, external factors included the perceived de-valuing of education by state governments. Tom highlighted the challenging funding environment he experienced working at a public institution. As he described it, “The politics at the state level in terms of higher education is pretty. . . I guess some people would call them colorful and some people would call them nasty. Some of them don’t seem to be very supportive of higher education, or they seem to think higher education needs to be run as a business.” Tom found the state-level political structures less conducive to the kind of work he sought to do in academic libraries. In order to maintain a sustainable leadership pipeline, academic library administrators need to develop skills sets to advocate for their organizations in these challenging fiscal times. Providing training and opportunities for department heads and ADs to contribute to those efforts of external advocacy would go a long way in preparing these potential future library deans.



The profession must engage emerging and experienced leaders in dialog around imposter syndrome to ensure we have qualified and interested candidates to pursue senior-level positions in academic libraries. Library deans play a critical role in demystifying the work required of them and how they manage their responsibilities to have the kind of impact that motivated them to first assume such positions. Creating internships and job shadow programs will help to close the leadership gap as potential applicants can better see administrative work first-hand. Building on the ARL Leadership Fellows program and other opportunities implemented within higher education serve as models for the library profession.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

“I think, more than ever, we need strong leadership. Even if you’re not in a formal leadership position, I think people need to have strong leadership skills because we are leading projects and we’re influencing laterally across campus, not just in an upward or downward motion. It doesn’t matter if you’re an introvert or an extrovert. If you don’t like people—back in the day maybe you could hide in the back office and be a cataloger—but that is not the kind of librarian we need today. I need librarians who are courageous and willing to go out and have conversations with people about the research they’re doing and what their students are doing and how we could partner with them. It’s just not going to cut it in the future of libraries.”

“Administration is largely about people, about working with and managing people. If that’s not something that brings you joy, is energizing to you to work with, manage, and try to develop people, then that’s maybe not a path for you. Because I do know people who are ambitious but also really don’t like managing people. There’s always going to be people that are difficult to manage. That’s part and parcel of the job. And if the pain of doing that offsets the joy too much of developing the really great people that you work with, then, yeah, I’d say there are other venues. That’s one final comment.”

Both of the quotations above emphasize the importance of developing interpersonal relationships and fostering engagement as necessary skill sets for academic librarians and administrators. All of us, regardless of our position descriptions or personalities, are in public-facing roles where people management and interactions drive our work. Higher education requires all of us to be leaders in small and big ways to remain relevant as universities continue to evolve. As each of the ten big ideas underscored in the previous chapters indicate, there is no one way of becoming or developing others to become leaders. A plurality of strategies are needed to address the leadership gap.

Big Idea #1: Developing a career ladder

Supervisors, library administrators, and professional associations must work with librarians to develop career ladders to scaffold skill acquisition. Regardless of a librarian’s anticipated career trajectory, leadership is needed at every level of an organization. Building hard and

soft leadership and management skills throughout the course of one's career prepares practitioners for assuming advanced roles with responsibilities for being engaged and motivated members of an organizational culture which fosters learning and development. Emerging and experienced leaders should evaluate their skill gaps and how those areas change over their careers to employ a scaffold approach that works for them and helps them achieve their goals. Skill development and acquisition need to become a regular part of our conversations, and not just reserved for an annual performance review or when a performance challenge emerges.

Big Idea #2: Mitigating identity crisis

In order to close the leadership gap in academic libraries, current library leaders must coach potential and emerging leaders to recognize the identity transition points that naturally occur throughout one's career. The transition from purely a practitioner to early leadership and management responsibilities is one identity shift. As leaders move further away from the practice of librarianship, they feel a diminished sense of personal value to the organization, despite their increasing ability to make change. Finding the balance between administrative work and the practice of librarianship will differ for each person. Library leaders should encourage their staff to reflect on what their ideal portfolio balance looks like, and to support them as they move through the identity transition points. Not all managers will be interested in maintaining elements of their daily practice of librarianship. For those who do, senior administrators should work with them to develop portfolios that keep them connected to domain-based duties. Moreover, the profession needs to acknowledge and provide support for those who enter into leadership and management roles and decide to step out of them back into practitioner positions.

Big Idea #3: Learning theory, applying to practice

The best preparation for leadership and management positions comes out of learning theories and applying them to daily practice. Individual academic libraries and the profession must foster a plurality of learning opportunities to provide emerging and potential leaders with formal, informal, and application-based ways of developing leadership and management skills throughout their careers. Coaching library leaders to assess their skill deficiencies and then working with them to determine programs and opportunities to address those gaps is a critical part of preparing the next generation to assume advanced positions in academic libraries. As the experiences of the ADs shared in this book indicate, the funding models for formal programs limit the individuals who can afford to engage in formal training. Ensuring low-cost or no-cost training options is a critical problem to be addressed in the coming years as the rate of retirements and vacancies at senior-levels increases. To have the broadest possible pool of qualified and interested candidates applying for administrative positions, we need to open formal training opportunities to a larger group of participants—and not limit those programs to participants coming from institutions with greater capacity for funding professional development.

Big Idea #4: Support

Developing the next generation of library leaders requires providing them with emotional and financial support. Current library leaders and colleagues must erase the stigma associated with ambition that pervades our culture. Regardless of one's career aspirations, as a profession, we need to have the capacity to motivate and encourage engagement, recognizing not everyone will be interested in management positions. However, each one of us can be a leader and move our organizations forward to best support our users. Rewarding both groups through flexible schedules, temporary assignments, and increased compensation are several approaches to ensure sustained engagement and support. Sharing stories of success and not so successful experiences serving in leadership and management roles will also provide support for those aspiring leaders and practitioners who seek positive management models.

Big Idea #5: Find your people

Establishing and growing a network throughout one's career is equally if not more important than the formal training library leaders engage in. Through these relationships, emerging leaders can find coaches, mentors, and cheerleaders to encourage and foster their growth and development. Developing a network within one's library and outside is important, as external relationships provide different perspectives on a given situation than those working within the same organization. Forming networks can lead to leadership experiences as part of service in professional associations, which offer low-stakes learning opportunities. Each librarian needs to determine for herself the qualities most desired from those in the network. These qualities may change over one's career as goals shift and work changes.

Big Idea #6: Leadership pause points

Library leaders must encourage their staffs to take time for pause points throughout their careers. One approach for creating these reflection points will be to use the years of experience required or preferred in job descriptions for managers, which on average is between five to ten years as a framework. As librarians near those milestones, library leaders should take those opportunities to talk with them about their evolving career goals, training needed to achieve their goals, and their short and long-term aspirations. Another approach is when a librarian earns tenure, often six years into her professional career. With that hurdle behind them, librarians will have more time to consider their career aspirations and support needed to achieve their goals. Both of those milestones—years of experience and tenure—could be used to provide the space to discuss a librarian's interest in advancing. In addition to a specific number of professional experiences or an externally determined milestone, like achieving tenure, library leaders should encourage their staff to take time after trying a new role, completing training, or serving in a leadership position in a professional association. Reflecting enables the emerging leader to consider how—or if—she wants to engage in leadership and management opportunities in the future.

Big Idea #7: Alternative leadership and management models

Library leaders must be creative when considering what leadership and management models fit within their organizations. We need to create alternative models in academic libraries that provide new leaders and managers with support to experiment with a new or temporary role. Offering flexible opportunities to gain leadership and management experience provides emerging leaders with the chance to try on leadership work and determine their ongoing interest in pursuing a future or permanent role. Sharing management responsibilities between librarians acknowledges the identity crisis many experience as their work becomes less domain-based, and enables them to remain involved in more library-related work, which would be an attractive portfolio for some.

Big Idea #8: Demystifying leadership and management

Library leaders at all levels of the organization must demystify the perceptions of leadership and management work, from the daily realities and responsibilities necessary to be successful in those roles. They need to develop formal and informal initiatives to share their own stories of advancement, their challenges, and their successes. One approach is to create programs in the library to have candid conversations about what a day in the life of a dean, senior administrator, or department head looks like. Developing a job shadow or internship program with a project component is a second method for clarifying the work of senior leaders. Professional associations should use their annual conferences, mentoring programs, and professional development series throughout the year to provide spaces and frameworks for these conversations, necessary at the industry-wide as well as the organizational level.

Big Idea #9: Succession planning

Succession planning must be the responsibility of all academic libraries. Regardless of one's position in the organizational hierarchy, each of us has important knowledge to share with others to build the library's capacity. In light of the demographic data indicating that library deans enter and remain in those roles later in life, and longer than in previous generations, members of Generation X may feel a lack of motivation or urgency to assume senior leadership positions, which will have a long-term impact on the profession as baby boomers continue to retire. Not limited to formal programs, reserved for when senior leaders transition out of their roles, succession planning should include attention paid to building leadership and management capacity throughout the organization, regardless of position description, to ensure leadership strengths do not solely rest with senior administrators.

Big Idea #10: Battling gender-based doubts

Despite the demographics of academic librarianship, men pursue leadership roles in greater numbers than women. Gender-based doubts are alive and well in our profession and impact those who choose to pursue leadership positions. Drawing on leadership development practices in other fields may help to address this systemic issue. The teaching and nursing fields may be two professions to examine, as both are female-dominated. As a profession,

we must value those with ambition—regardless of their gender—and work to support their career trajectories. Considering the language used in job ads, the makeup of search committees, and the onboarding process are three key components to facilitate a shift in gender-based doubts that plague our profession. For those currently in leadership roles, we need to speak candidly about our experiences and feelings of imposter syndrome to remove societal stigmas around self-doubt and preparedness.



We all have a leadership journey story to share. It is the responsibility of each of us in academic libraries to learn from the experiences of others as we each pursue our own career path. As these ten big ideas invite you to consider your next steps as an academic library leader, so too do they enable us, as a profession, to address our leadership gap and continue the work to develop a leadership pipeline to move our organizations forward in support of the research and learning missions of our colleges and universities.

Appendix A. Methods

In each of the twenty-three interviews, there were four sections of questions to guide each session: personal narratives or stories of entry into a leadership or management position, career path, developing the next generation of library leaders, and future career aspirations.

After each session, I wrote a field memo to capture my observations of body language, session content, and initial connections between content shared across sessions. I used a third-party vendor, which transcribed each interview session. The transcriptionists removed verbal filler words including “um,” “ah,” “uh,” and “like.” The transcriptionists also remove false starts that interviewees may have had when initially answering a question. These initial phrases often anchored the interviewee, who then gathered their thoughts and continued to answer the question with a more completely formed thought.

After receiving the transcriptions from the vendor, I listened to each recording and proofread the transcriptions. I edited them to reflect any emphasis on a particular word that when listening to the interview seemed to impact the meaning or one’s interpretation of the word. I italicized these emphasized words. In select instances, I added cues into the transcription, including “pause” or “long pause” to indicate that the participant either chose their words carefully when responding to particular questions or took significant time in comparison to their response time to other questions.

After I completed the proofreading and believed that I had transcriptions that accurately captured the data, I copied and pasted the transcriptions into a Wordle or word cloud application that presents words by size correlated to the frequency with which they appear in the text. I was curious to know what the most commonly said words were as a strategy for coding the text. The most commonly used words were:

- people
- think
- things
- library
- leadership
- know
- time
- work

Other words frequently used, but less often, were:

- management
- position
- different
- little
- skills
- career

Next, I printed out the transcriptions and read each one in its entirety to begin to identify commonly used words, phrases, and ideas as the first round of coding the text. At this stage in the analysis, I began to understand that the participants had several common experiences that led me to identify initial codes, including:

- impact
- vision
- motivation
- family
- compensation
- capacity-building
- organizational culture

To further analyze those codes and determine the themes across the data, I created an Excel spreadsheet that had one sheet for each question asked. On each sheet, I created a column for the participants' initial response and a second column for responses to any question probes I asked during the interview. I then copied and pasted each participant's response to the questions into each sheet. At the end of this process, I had organized the interview responses by question and no longer by the complete narrative of each interviewee.

During several of the interviews, I changed the order of the questions I asked in response to the participants' previous comments. There were several participants who provided more information in the personal narrative series of questions that impacted the number of questions I could ask throughout the remainder of the interview, in the interest of time. After separating out the data, I then read through each response for each question. I developed a second round of codes, many of which remained the same from the initial open coding process. The revised codes included:

- support
- external forces
- formal leadership training
- organization culture

From those codes, I then examined the data for patterns to develop themes or commonalities that connected the experiences and reflections of the participants.

Appendix B. Call for Participation and Interview Protocol

Subject line

Call for participation: *Developing the Next Generation of Library Leaders* (forthcoming ACRL monograph)

Email body

There exists a dearth of qualified and interested library leaders to assume senior administrative positions in academic libraries. In the coming years, the number of retirements will leave a high number of dean and assistant dean or associate university librarian positions vacant. As academic libraries continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of the modern university, qualified and passionate leaders are more critical to an organization's success than ever before.

To address these challenges, Lori Birrell is conducting one-hour interviews with Assistant/Associate Deans, Directors, or Librarians of academic libraries to explore their personal experiences and career paths to better understand possible approaches that the profession might take to nurture the leadership skill development of library practitioners and middle managers as a way to ensure that academic libraries continue to have highly effective administrators leading their organizations. These interviews will be included in a monograph to be published by ACRL in 2019.

Please email Lori directly at lori@birrell.us by Friday, October 20th if you're interested in being interviewed. Additional details about the project are attached here in an information letter.

Interview Protocol

Good morning. Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study. My name is Lori Birrell and I'm the principal investigator on the project. I'll be asking the questions today.

Your responses today will contribute to the forthcoming monograph, titled: *Developing the Next Generation of Library Leaders*. The monograph will be published by the Association of College & Research Libraries in 2019.

This book explores the personal experiences and career paths of senior library administrators as a way of understanding possible approaches that the profession might take to nurture the leadership skill development of library practitioners and middle managers as a way to ensure that academic libraries continue to have highly effective administrators leading their organizations.

The guiding question for this research is: How can an assistant dean's personal experiences about leadership and management advancement inform methods that the profession

might implement to best foster an interest in leadership and management advancement among library practitioners?

Our session today will last no more than 1 hour. I have 25 questions to ask you. To ensure that we get through all 25 questions, I'll be moving the conversation along. All the information received from you, including your name and any other identifying information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy. You can choose not to answer any question you don't want to answer.

To start, please share your title and a brief description of the parts of your professional portfolio, and how many years you've held that position.

Personal Narrative

Can you tell me about your first leadership experience in libraries? Leadership defined as an opportunity to influence others and provide a vision for a project or task.

Can you tell me about your first management experience in libraries? Defined as: project management, coordination, financial management, etc.

Can you tell me about your first management experience supervising others in libraries?

Please describe what skills you anticipated needing, and acquired before even looking at the position?

How did you go about gaining those skills?

Please describe any skills that you found you needed to work on once you got into the position?

How did you go about gaining those skills?

As you continued to advance into more senior positions, what kinds of skills did you determine were needed?

Were these skills something you planned in advance to get to be able to move ahead?

Career Paths

If you had a "do over" in your career to date what would it be?

Who do you consider the most influential person in making you the person you are today? Why?

What's the single best piece of professional advice you ever received? Did you take it? Why/ not?

What led you to pursue that first management position?

What led you to pursue subsequent positions?

What kind of support did you receive or not as you considered or once you did advance into more senior roles? e.g., mentoring, formal leadership programs, advanced degrees, job shadow, etc.

Developing the Next Generation of Library Leaders

I'd love to hear "lessons learned" that you've passed on to others. What are some examples?

How would you say your career path and skill development is similar to or differs from that of your employees?

Please describe what if any ways you've developed to provide those who work for you with opportunities to develop leadership or management skills?

How have those professional development opportunities impacted the organization? e.g., succession planning, filling vacancies in leadership or management positions, filling temporary vacancies.

What vehicles do you have to let employees self-identify an interest in wanting to learn leadership/management skills?

What impact has that support had on your organization?

What impact might that support have on the library profession over time?

Future Career Aspirations

What are your career aspirations?

Would you consider advancing further in libraries? e.g., advancing into dean or director roles, into more prestigious organizations, etc.

Why or why not?

What has led you to those aspirations?

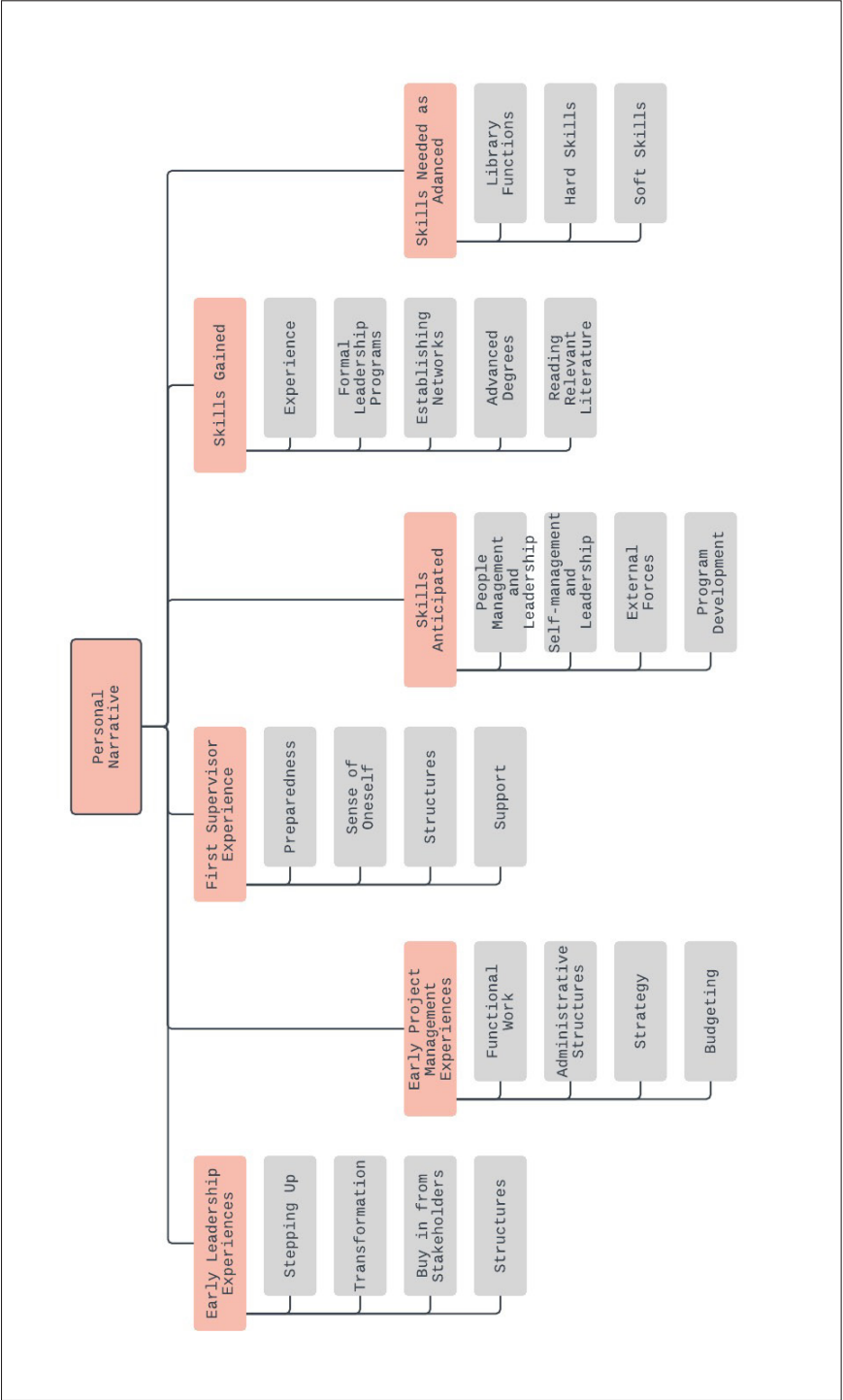
Do you have any final thoughts?

Thank you so much for your time today.

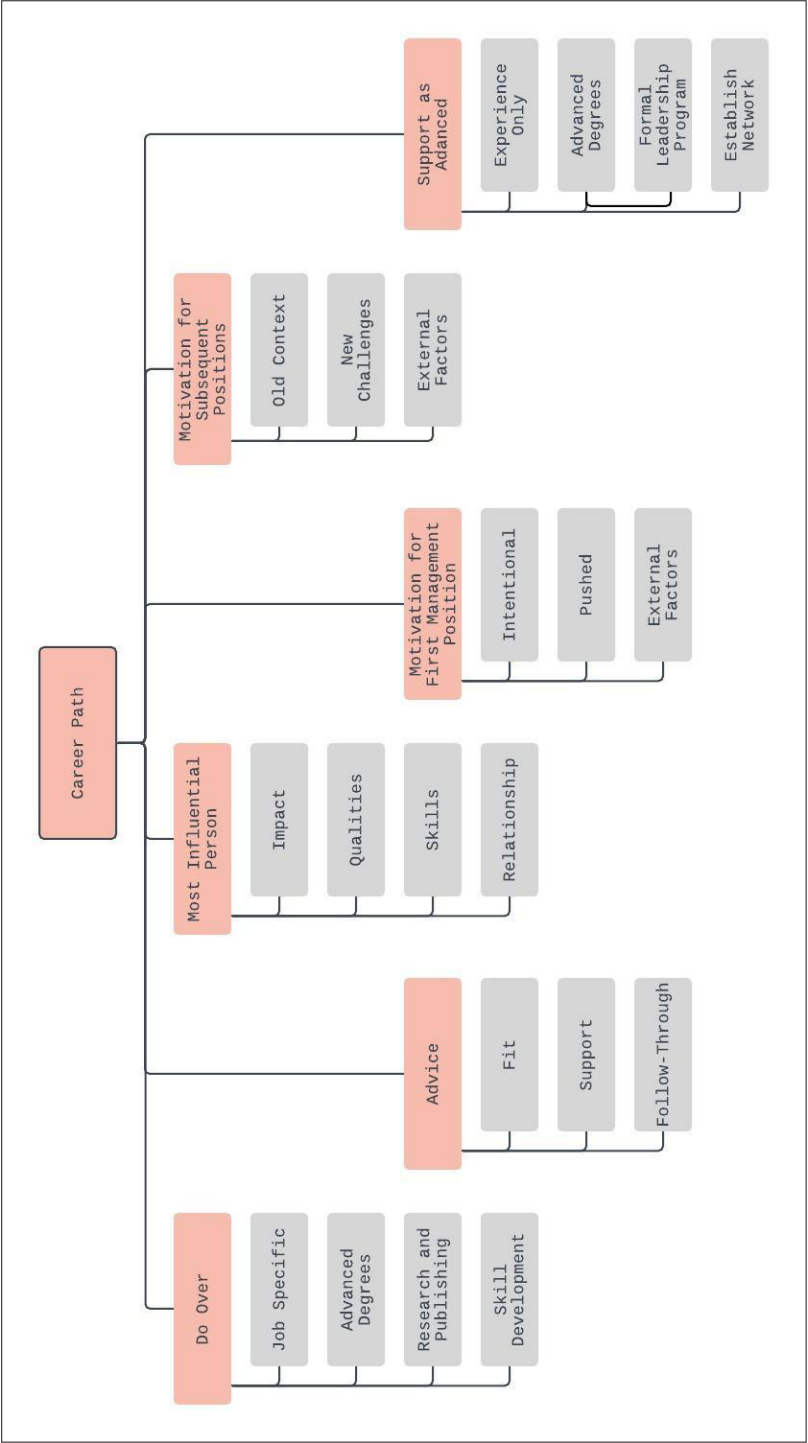
Appendix C. Code Trees

Each of the code trees below illustrates the open coding process I completed after an initial review and coding of the interview transcripts. Over the course of writing the book and analyzing my data, several of the initial terms I generated from the open coding process changed to better reflect the participants' meaning and use of those terms. In addition, the differences between early leadership experiences and early project management experiences became too subtle to warrant different analyses, and so during the editing phase of writing, I combined those sections. Similarly, while participants were asked a series of questions related to the skills they anticipated needing before assuming leadership and management positions, how they gained those skills, and the skills needed as they advanced further in their careers, the methods they used to gain needed skills did not change. Therefore, I only include one section of analysis in the book to explore those approaches. I concluded each interview by asking the participant if he or she had any final thoughts to share. While those thoughts are not expressed in a specific chapter or section, they are part of my analysis, which led to the ten big ideas discussed throughout the book.

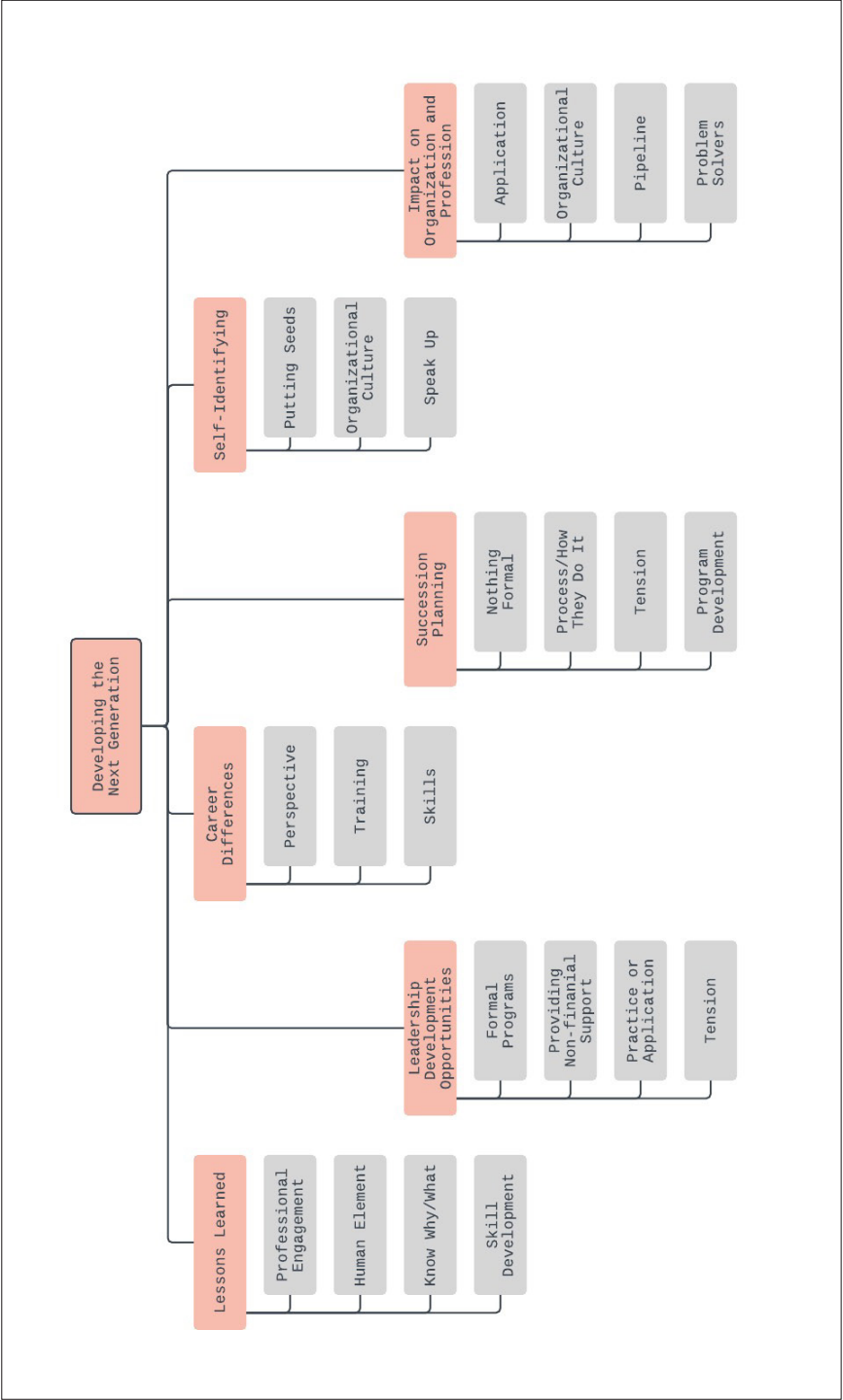
Personal Narrative



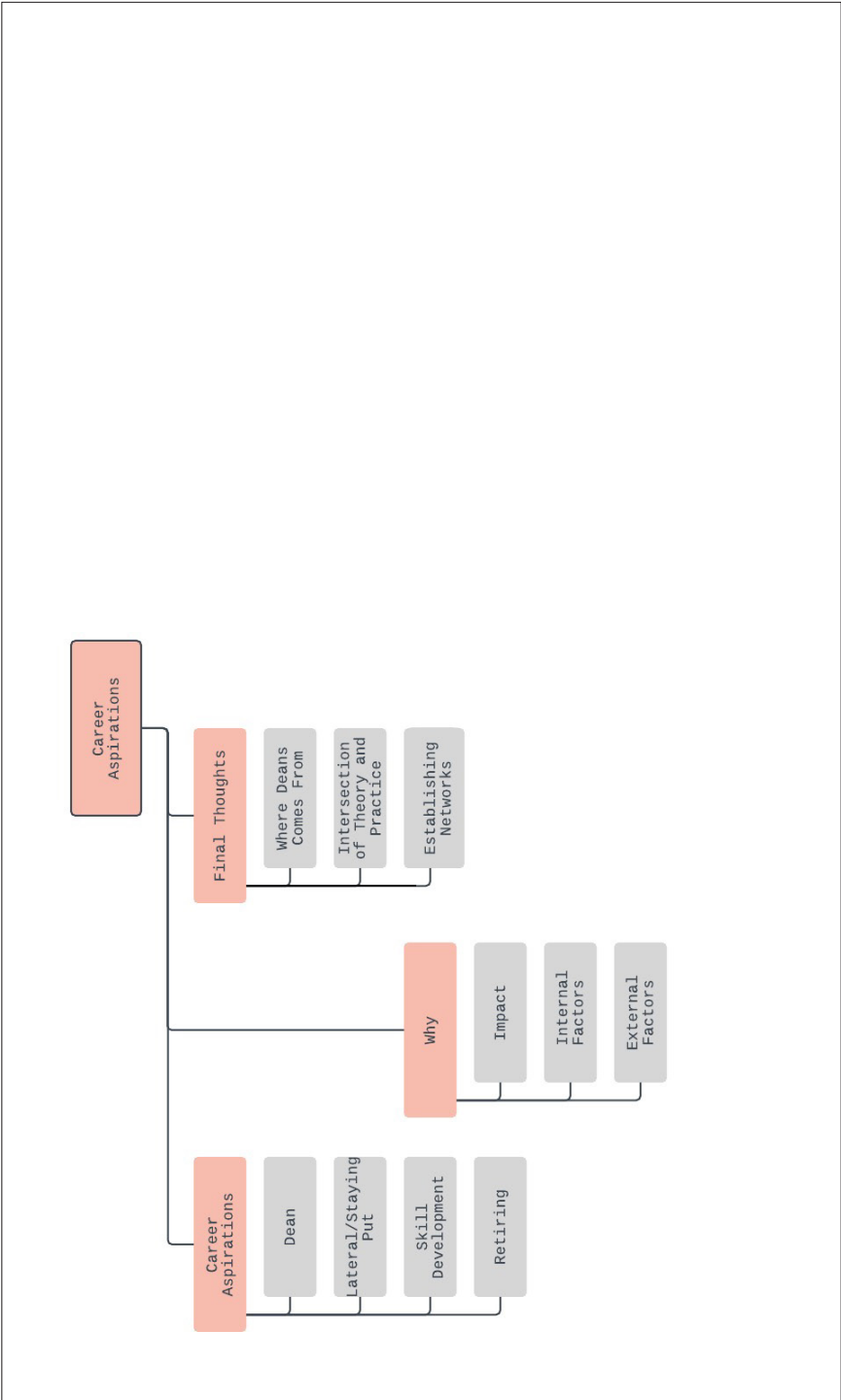
Career Path



Developing the Next Generation of Library Leaders



Career Aspirations



Endnotes

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2. Komives, Lucas, and McMahon, *Exploring Leadership*, 6–7.
3. Peter Senge, “The Leader’s New Work: Building Learning Organizations,” *MIT Sloan Management Review* 32, no. 1 (1990): 9.
4. Peter Hernon and Nancy Rossiter eds, *Making a Difference: Leadership in Academic Libraries* (Westport: Libraries Unlimited, 2007), 13.
5. To facilitate the reading of this book, when I refer to assistant deans, I’m referring to roles including assistant dean, associate dean, assistant university librarian, associate university librarian, assistant director, and associate director. I interviewed twenty-three people and omitted one interview during the data analysis phase of my research, as her job duties could not be described as an AD role.
6. The gender, race, years of experience, and approximate ages of each composite character have been developed based on averages derived from the demographics of my participants. Eight men and fourteen women participated. Ten worked at member libraries of the Association of Research Libraries. Two worked at community college libraries. The remaining participants worked at four-year academic institutions. Two participants worked in Canada, and twenty-one worked in the United States. The average number of years of experience working in libraries—defined as professional or paraprofessional experience, with a Masters of Library Science degree—was 17.42 years. The maximum number of years of experience was 35 years. The minimum number of years was seven. The average length of time a participant had served in her role as AD was thirty-nine months or a little more than three years. The maximum amount of time in an AD role was eleven years, and the minimum length of time was six months.
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9. Wilder, *Delayed Retirements*.
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24. Hernon and Rossiter, *Making a Difference*, 16.
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30. "LLAMA Foundational Competencies—White Paper," 1–5.
31. Ibid., 6.
32. Ibid., 6–7.
33. Beginning in 2018, LLAMA offered on-line courses to address the leadership competencies: <http://www.ala.org/llama/llama-online-courses-and-webinars>.
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95. My target population consisted of any library professionals who worked in an academic library and who held the title of assistant dean or similar position at the time of the interview. I sent out a call for participation to four library listservs in the fall of 2017. The call remained open for three weeks. All who met the criteria detailed above and who responded were interviewed. Eight men and fourteen women participated in Skype or phone interviews. I omitted one interview during the data analysis phase of my research, as her job duties could not be described as an AD role. Approximately three-quarters of the participants were white. These demographics reflect the conclusions drawn in: Roger C. Schonfeld and Liam Sweeney, "Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity: Members of Association of Research Libraries," ITHAKA S+R (2017):

- doi: <https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.304524>. Ten of the participants worked at member libraries of the Association of Research Libraries. Two worked at community college libraries. The remaining participants worked at four-year academic institutions. Two participants worked in Canada, and twenty worked in the United States. The average number of years of experience working in libraries—defined as professional or paraprofessional experience, with a Masters of Library Science degree—was seventeen years. The range of years of experience was seven to thirty-five years. The average length of time a participant had served in her role as AD was a little more than three years. The overall amount of time working in an AD role was between six months–eleven years.
96. In addition to these twenty-three ADs, I interviewed five deans or directors of academic libraries. Three women and two men participated. The average number of years those participants had worked in libraries—defined as professional or paraprofessional roles with a Masters of Library Science degree—was ten years. Of those participants, three had served in their roles for less than two years and could reflect on their transition into this senior position. Two of the five participants had advanced from a subject specialist type or practitioner position to being the head of a library, as there was no administrative layer equivalent to an AD position in their organization. For this second group of participants, they were able to reflect on their skill development as leaders as they moved from strictly a practitioner role to an administrator role, with very little functional responsibilities.
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 104. In Stanley Wilder’s 2015 report, *Delayed Retirements and the Youth Movement among ARL Library Professionals*, he cites 65 percent of ARL directors as age sixty-five and older. By contrast, in 1986, only 3 percent were sixty-five and older. His data suggests library directors enter into or remain in these senior roles longer than their predecessors.
 105. In the year following my interviews with these 22 ADs, four assumed dean or director positions. One began working at an ARL library, one at a liberal arts college, and two at researcher universities. At the time of our interview, only one of the participants was actively searching for a new position.

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