The theme of this issue of Synergy: News from ARL Diversity Programs is “transitions”. Whether transitioning from student to professional or from one position of leadership to another, one will always encounter challenges and opportunities that are unexpected and that can reshape one’s view of self and of the profession. The issue concludes with a call for applications for the newest diversity recruitment initiative administered by ARL and funded by a generous grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Service (IMLS). This partnership between ARL, the Music Library Association (MLA), and five partner ARL member libraries seeks to recruit students from traditionally underrepresented ethnic and racial minority groups into music and performing arts librarianship.

Three former ARL Diversity programs participants offer their reflections on what it’s like to transition from one setting to another within the library and information profession, and how their experiences in ARL programs informed their thinking and behaviors as they made those transitions. Denise Stephens is a graduate of the “inaugural” class of the ARL Leadership and Development Program (LCDP) and currently University Librarian at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) Libraries. Stephens offers her thoughts on the impact of the LCDP training on her trajectory, particularly from the perspective of one who left the profession, temporarily, only to find herself returning to a leadership position in an ARL library.

Yale Law Librarian, Teresa Miguel, (ARL Diversity Scholar 2004–2006) offers sagacious words to anyone—even the neophyte librarian—interested in pursuing a management position in a library about how to start positioning oneself to make a transition to leadership even early in one’s career. Miguel offers practical advice on effective behaviors for accomplishing this goal, and offers insight on how one can be a leader at any level of an organization.

Finally, 2010 Career Enhancement Program (CEP) Fellow Brian Leaf recounts his experience of transitioning from being a student into a professional role in an ARL library. He offers reflections on a ‘reality check’ that he encountered rather early into his five-month tenure at the Ohio State University Libraries and lessons learned regarding managing his own expectations with respect to this transition.

I hope you will enjoy reading the three articles from these former participants of ARL Diversity Programs. For more information about ARL Diversity Programs, please visit: www.arl.org/diversity/

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About the ARL Diversity Programs

The ARL Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and ARL member libraries, offers a stipend of up to $10,000 to each ARL Diversity Scholar in support of graduate library and information science education. ARL Diversity Scholars participate in the annual ARL Leadership Symposium, a research library visit hosted by the Purdue University Libraries, and a mentoring relationship with a research library professional. For more information about the Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce, visit www.arl.org/diversity/init/.

The ARL/Music Library Association (MLA) Diversity and Inclusion Initiative, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), MLA, and ARL member libraries, seeks to recruit diverse students with advanced degrees in music to careers in academic and research libraries. The program offers tuition support and a paid internship for up to one year in one of five partner music/research libraries. Other components of the ARL/MLA DII include a formal mentor program and support to attend the MLA annual conference where participants will receive specialized instruction in the areas of career development and effective job search strategies. More information about the program is forthcoming, but an announcement concerning the IMLS award can be found at: www.arl.org/news/pr/ARL-MLA-DII22june11.shtml.

The ARL Career Enhancement Program (CEP), funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and ARL member libraries, offers MLIS graduate students from underrepresented groups an opportunity to jump-start their careers in research libraries by providing a robust internship experience in an ARL member library. Each CEP fellow participates in a six- to twelve-week paid internship in an ARL library, a mentoring relationship with a professional librarian while on campus for the internship, and an opportunity to attend the annual ARL Leadership Symposium during the American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting. There is also potential for academic credit for the practical intern. For more information about the ARL Career Enhancement Program, visit www.arl.org/diversity/cep/.

The ARL Leadership and Career Development Program (LCDP) is an 18-month program to prepare midcareer librarians from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to take on increasingly demanding leadership roles in ARL libraries. The LCDP design includes: two LCDP Institutes, an opening and closing event held in conjunction with national professional meetings, a career-coaching relationship with an ARL library director or staff member, and a personalized visit to an ARL member library. For more information about the LCDP, visit www.arl.org/diversity/lcdp/.

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The Impact of LCDP

Evaluating the impact of participation in the ARL Leadership and Career Development Program (LCDP) on transitions into leader roles inspires some thought about the program’s influence on the personal transition into leader. The first LCDP cohort (1998–1999) was a class of fellow travelers unsure of how or whether the program would shape our futures. We engaged leadership as a framework for personal development. For me, the outcome was transformational. Through the LCDP experience, I discovered my own leader identity and path for growth. Transitioning into particularly challenging leading roles in the years since LCDP, I reflect on the leadership issues and concepts introduced as a result of participation in the program. Two notable leader role transitions demonstrate the program’s influence on my personal journey in research library organizations. In one case, the transition was unanticipated—the result of organizational emergency. In the second case, the transition to library leadership came after a circuitous route through campus administration. Both experiences presented significant high-level contexts for the practice of leadership shaped by a growing LCDP-initiated knowledge base.

Walking Across the Leadership Threshold

My initial transition in association with LCDP was to an awareness of my own capacity for, and commitment to, leadership. Five years after earning the MLS degree at the University of Oklahoma in 1993, I was very active in library activities and benefitted from numerous growth opportunities at the University of Virginia. I was restless and wanted to broaden my professional portfolio. I wanted to play a more significant role in the library and advised the University Librarian of this ambition. Having taken interest in me as protégé, Karin Wittenborg’s advice that “you need to do this” was encouraging and timely. With little more than interest in leading in some way and a sense of adventure, I agreed to compete for a position in the inaugural LCDP class. Prior to approaching the LCDP, I gravitated into roles allowing for some degree of influence—primarily committee and program development roles. However, I had not developed a coherent vision of myself as a leader, nor had specific leadership goals emerged in my thinking. In fact, until I began to reflect and draft the application package, I had not thought critically about the topic. By the time I completed the application letter, I was able to articulate a clear goal: I wanted more than to simply work in a research library. I wanted to make a difference by influencing the direction and impact of libraries in the academy. This was a transformative event for me because it confirmed my professional direction going forward.

Learning Leadership: Acquiring a Knowledge Base and Knowledge of Self

Grounded in theoretical principles and leadership thinkers of the late 20th Century, the LCDP guided individual development by uncovering personal leader traits; introducing strategic leadership tools; and providing organizational contexts for applying leader practice. Through various psychometric assessments, I learned how personal preferences, decision styles, and personality types influence leadership style. Models of and approaches to change management, strategic planning, and organizational communication gave context to leadership challenges and navigation of complex organizational dynamics. Case studies allowed for integration of theory and reflection on the implications of leader behavior in relation to emotional intelligence, power, alliance building, and conflict management.

The learning was only a beginning. I realized there was much more to understand through experience and continued inquiry. For me, organizational leadership emerged as a subject of both informal and formal study, as well as some publication in the library literature. Primarily, the LCDP fueled my intentional transition to leadership and enabled professional advancement into the increasingly responsible leader roles that followed. As I prepared to move into senior library management, I took these essential LCDP learning outcomes with me:
Leadership is intentional. Successful organizational outcomes are seldom accidental;
• Things change. People make transitions. Leaders understand the difference;
• Trust is essential to effective leadership. People trust people—not figureheads; and
• Communicate. Communicate. Communicate again.

Transition to Unanticipated Leadership
Within three years of my LCDP experience, I joined Syracuse University as Associate University Librarian for Public Services. Having expanded the initial LCDP leadership knowledge base with additional developmental learning and considerable change management practice in a prior department head role, I was prepared engage this new opportunity. However, I was unexpectedly asked to step into the Acting University Librarian role within 18 months due to the university librarian’s illness. His clear instruction to me was to “lead”—continuing an agenda of strategic planning and organizational restructuring. The program’s attention to leader strategy and principles for change leadership proved highly valuable in my approach to a sudden role shift. My challenge was to maintain strategic library momentum during a time of organizational uncertainty.

Collaborative leadership with the library administrative team and department heads ensured smooth operations. Maintaining a calm and productive work environment required consistent and frequent leader communication concerning the state of the organization and about the ill university librarian. Graham laid the foundation for confidence in my leadership with a heart-felt endorsement. However, the charge to lead—rather than to maintain station keeping—raised discomfort among staff that saw active leadership as contrary to the role of an acting leader. Applying intentional leadership in the face of such organizational stress involved focusing on the imperative to establish strategic goals advancing the library now, not later. A unified leadership team communicating consistent messages and modeling an optimistic outlook helped to promote a future orientation throughout the library. Though disagreement about specifics existed, we promoted deliberate change through participatory planning. The New Century Library Initiative and associated structural changes occurred during this difficult time. Though the Initiative sought to facilitate future library innovation, its most important outcome may have been that of mobilizing and focusing organizational energy forward under potentially destabilizing circumstances. Lessons on shared leadership, personal leadership behavior, organizational communication, and team building carried from LCDP and strengthened in practice served as a strong platform for leadership.

Transition to New Library Leadership
After five years of senior university administration work as Vice Provost for Information Services and CIO at the University of Kansas, I recently returned to full-time research library leadership as University Librarian at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). This re-entry into library leadership has been influenced by the LCDP experience. Specifically, the role of personal assessment and reflection in leadership played a role in affirming a commitment to the library as a vehicle for advancing the academic mission. At this point in my career, growth comes from opportunities that facilitate integration of prior learning about leadership practice with rich real-world contexts. Three factors in the current UCSB environment make leading this library compelling: a highly talented and dedicated staff; knowledgeable and supportive university leadership; and unique opportunities for significant physical and organizational enhancement. With LCDP-inspired self-knowledge, I know these institutional factors complement my preference for originating and conceptualizing collaborative approaches and innovations. Encouraged by partners and prospects, I am optimistic about our shared interests and future.

Conclusion: On a Deliberate Path
The basic leader knowledge base acquired through LCDP is learning from more than a decade ago. The learning acquired from that experience continues to have relevance in my intentional practice of leadership. The ARL LCDP is a starting point for personal leadership development only—initiating a path for continued growth. Each participant builds upon the base to the extent desired. For me, participating in the LCDP initiated and continues to influence my very deliberate professional journey.
Teresa Miguel is Associate Director, Latin American Bibliographer, and Lecturer in Law and Legal Research at the Lillian Goldman Law Library at Yale Law School. She is an active member the Foreign, International, and Comparative Law Special Interest Section (FCIL-SIS) of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), and the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM). She is also a member of the Arizona and Pennsylvania bars. She was an ARL and University of Arizona Knowledge River Scholar in 2004–2005.

So You Want to be a Manager: Prepare from Day One

Congratulations! You’ve landed your first library gig. During your interview, you were asked, “So, where do you see yourself in five years?” You were ready for this question. You replied, “After a few years learning my new job, I’d like to explore management positions either here or at another quality institution. Eventually, I would like to be a director.” Fortunately, your library supports your ambitions and will work with you to achieve your goals. Now it’s up to you to take the initiative and follow-up… starting on day one.

This article suggests ways to position yourself to assume leadership roles early in your career and prepare to leap into a management position. Such a move does not happen overnight and there are many opportunities to demonstrate leadership and management potential along the way. Keep in mind that one can be a leader within a library without being a manager; and often directors look to those leaders, or to those who have demonstrated leadership potential, when considering management positions.

Fostering Relationships

As a new librarian, nothing is more important than cultivating a one-on-one relationship with your supervisor and with your director. These are the people most capable of evaluating your potential for management roles and positions of leadership. They will be the ones recommending you (or not) to peer institutions. Your immediate supervisor and your director wield incredible influence over your professional future.

One of the first opportunities to work closely with your supervisor is in the creation of goals for your first year at the library. Take these goals seriously as they will be the foundation and benchmark of future promotion and tenure reviews. In your first year, aim high but do not create goals you know you cannot reach. Successfully reaching challenging goals demonstrates hard work, dedication, and the ability to follow-through—all pertinent qualities in a manager.

In your day-to-day work, especially at the beginning, you will not know the answers to many questions; ask your supervisor. This is a great way to start a dialogue, demonstrate your eagerness to learn, and show your trust and confidence in your supervisor. Supervisors enjoy when their direct reports ask questions. It makes them feel useful and knowledgeable, and validates their existence as being more than just one who signs off on performance appraisals and travel requests.

As you start to become comfortable in your new position, begin to accept and ask for additional work. Create a “culture of yes” without taking on too much. If you have to say no, explain why, but do not say no too often. Take the initiative! Suggest projects, submit ideas, support and go the extra mile for your colleagues. Follow through with your assigned tasks and strictly observe deadlines.

Begin to develop an expertise in a certain area filling a gap in library service, such as teaching, being the go-to person for copyright issues, or providing language or cultural skills. When I came to the Yale Law Library I was the only professional librarian fluent in Spanish. Within my first year I offered to take over collection responsibilities for Iberia and Latin America. The librarian in charge of collecting foreign material taught me the tricks of the trade, introduced me to his colleagues at local meetings of foreign and international law librarians, and eventually sent me off to conferences and book fairs in the region. This initiative progressed into specializing in foreign and international law reference, and after a few years, I was promoted to Associate Librarian for Foreign and International Law.

In addition to working closely with your supervisor, try to get to know your director as well. The directors of like-libraries, such as ARL libraries, law libraries, medical libraries, etc., all know each other and they share information with one another. The sooner you develop a professional...
relationship with your director, the sooner your director will begin to consider you for management positions and be able to recommend you to peer institutions. Tell your director what your career goals are, both short term and long term. Ask for advice on how to begin to achieve those goals.

Committee Work

Leadership opportunities at your new work place will initially come looking for you in the form of committee work. If they do not, seek them out as they are easy to find; you won’t have to look too far. In many libraries, you will have the opportunity to join library committees within your immediate work place as well as library-wide almost immediately upon starting your entry-level position. Library committees often solicit coworkers, especially new and energetic ones, to participate. This is a great opportunity for you to meet colleagues within your library and to connect with colleagues from other libraries on campus with whom you would not normally work or meet. It is also a terrific way to make yourself known on campus.

Do not hesitate to chair a committee immediately. I found that chairing the Yale University Libraries Diversity Council immediately upon my arrival to campus was an excellent way for me to meet colleagues and administrators outside of the Yale Law Library. I also had the time to devote to chairing such an immense committee because my workload at my new position was still relatively light. The people I met on this committee are still some of my closest and most supportive colleagues.

A smaller law library committee afforded me the opportunity to create and lead a movie series with our graduate students that has evolved into a staple activity at the law school. Movie Night @ YLS, now in its sixth year, was an attempt to reach out and connect with our small group of international graduate students in a fun, collaborative, and educational way. This adventure also allowed me to brush-up on copyright law as well.

When my director asked me to chair the law library’s Strategic Planning Committee I did not realize at the time what an amazing opportunity it would be to demonstrate leadership and management potential. The result was a labor-intensive, fun, and rewarding committee that worked diligently under my leadership for about seven months to create a five-year strategic plan. I believe my work chairing this committee validated me as a leader among my colleagues and proved to my director that I could be an effective and successful manager. This work also resulted in the forthcoming article publication.

In addition to library and professional committees, seek out opportunities to participate in university-wide groups. Many universities have community service-oriented affinity groups and interdisciplinary committees. This is an effective way to make connections with university faculty and staff from all over campus.

A natural outgrowth of library and university committee work is similar work for your relevant professional organization. Sections and committees of our professional organizations such as the American Library Association and the American Association of Law Libraries are constantly looking for new, up-and-coming, eager librarians to inject life into the organization. These activities are an effective and quick way to network with colleagues from around the country, while remembering that your new library is your priority.

Continuous Learning

Seek opportunities for training that are both immediately relevant to your library work as well as outside the library realm but within your areas of interest, including language and technology classes, and leadership and management seminars. My great-grandfather always said, “La educación no ocupa sitio.” Literally, education does not take up space; practically, learning is never a waste of time. Demonstrate a real interest in learning how to be a leader and manager. For example, request leave-time to attend leadership programs and seminars, and offer to pay some or all of the costs if the library cannot do so. After all, this is an investment in your future.

When I started working in the foreign and international unit, I learned that we have a very important German law collection so I asked for permission to audit a graduate level German-for-Reading class. The following year I took a freshman German class. Combined, the two classes gave me sufficient German knowledge to be able to perform basic surveys of German legal material and databases, and assist researchers in locating relevant material.

Publish!

Finally, start to publish. If you are not a natural, as most of us are not, find a mentor within your library who already has a publishing track record and who would be willing to co-write an article with you. Another approach might be to author something independently. Always enlist the aid
of an experienced colleague to review your work and offer suggestions for improvement. This might be your supervisor or someone outside of your immediate unit. Start small, with a familiar topic, novel experience, or effective committee outcome. My first substantive publication as a librarian was a refined version of a paper I wrote in library school. Along these lines, keep up with the literature in your field. It will help inspire you to contribute your own ideas and experiences to the growing body of library literature.

Time, Effort, and Patience

If you ask ten other managers for advice on how to position yourself for a management position, I have no doubt you will get ten different answers. However, I think there would be agreement that above all, one needs to work hard, be open to learning and advice, and be patient. It takes time and effort to climb the proverbial ladder, to progressively assume more responsibility, and to eventually take on a management role.

Endnotes


What is Experience? Five Months in the Life of a Freshman Librarian

I work with a fantastic group of people and under a visionary administration. I have an especially supportive supervisor whose amazing trust encourages and motivates me to keep going above and beyond the call of duty every day. This has made all the difference in every aspect of my work. As I reflect on the past five months at The Ohio State University (OSU), I am not sure I can offer the new library graduate bullet points of advice. I leave that to the two authors in this issue who have already proven themselves in the field and to numerous resources available online on professional development. However, I think I can answer the experience question by sharing some of my own lessons and observations.

First, I must acknowledge ARL’s Career Enhancement Program (CEP) for opening up a world to me that I would not have been aware of otherwise. My CEP internship at the University of Kentucky helped expose me to an area of librarianship about which I knew very little. The ARL Leadership Symposium brought issues like scholarly communication, information literacy, and emerging roles in the academic research library to my attention. This not only gave me a big picture view of the profession, but forced me to examine and learn more about my own strengths and challenges. Finally, the perspectives of others in my ARL cohort helped me think through ideas while providing a support network that I continue to utilize and value. Together, these opportunities helped inspire and motivate me when I felt discouraged in library school, and the connections I made helped me land my current position at OSU. Thus, I never feel alone in my success or frustration, and I am deeply appreciative of everyone who has lent wisdom to me and advocated for me.

When I first began working at OSU, I received two seemingly conflicting pieces of advice. One was to take chances and run
with my ideas. As a resident librarian I am, perhaps, encouraged to be creative but am afforded a buffer for any errors I might commit. The second was to stand back, listen, and learn the organization. The academic library can be complex and understanding it is important before taking on ambitious projects. Like many young librarians, I am eager to make my mark on the profession. I have an attitude of “why not?” and seizing opportunities served me well as a student. Guess which piece of advice sounded more attractive to me? The former, naturally.

There’s a TED talk about the online gaming generation by Jane McGonigal. She describes a trait possessed by online gamers called urgent optimism, or the belief that problems can be immediately tackled and solved. As a game designer, she would like to leverage the untapped resource of the dedicated gamers who tackle virtual scenarios and redirect them towards real-life problems. As a former gamer, I think I was an unknowing convert because I entered graduate school, and now my work with that same urgent optimism.

I enjoy writing, and as a result, my contributions to projects have been marked by comprehensive research and lengthy documentation. With colleagues, both in and out of the library, I worked on at least six different conference proposals. Nonetheless, it was initially surprising to me how often I sit at my desk staring at a blank document and thinking about what to produce. Aside from research, coming up with some sort of report or presentation is roughly what a good portion of my real work entails as an instructional designer. It is, generally, a creative process that I cannot put a timeline on, and it often ends up coming home with me.

At the same time, in addition to my formal orientation sessions to the library, I also met individually with as many people as possible—documenting insights from each one—in attempt to quickly cultivate relationships and familiarize myself with institutional knowledge and culture. My extra activities were ambitious as well. I co-developed an internal blog, created an online learning community for a class I taught, started training as a volunteer docent to learn more about arts education, and attended numerous campus workshops to continue my professional development. Some of these activities proved helpful, others extraneous or even problematic.

As time went on, I felt increasingly frustrated. Doing any of my work was a luxury with all the various meetings, projects, and committees that I was compelled to attend. Current projects or ideas I wanted to pursue seemed to be constantly displaced on my to-do list. Few things ever went as perfectly as I had hoped. Many things were out of my control and everything seemed to take longer than it should have. I also found that I was constantly wondering about relationships with my new colleagues and wondered if I had inadvertently burnt any bridges by my own frankness or idiosyncrasies. I then reached out to peers and mentors about how to navigate the organization given the limited amount of time. It took me some time to realize that all the projects and meetings I felt burdened by were actually an honor and served as recognition that I had a place in the organization and that my contributions were valued.

A friend offered an observation regarding my trajectory over the last few months and characterized me as having been idealistic and fired up at the start. That initial excitement turned into frustration. At some point, I believe my frustration turned into dissatisfaction followed by determination. Now she describes me as being “realistic, calm, responsible, and consistent.” If that is the end goal, I’m not sure I can trace a clear path for anyone to follow. To try to profess one is reminiscent of career panels in graduate school in which information professionals would talk about how they moved from one position to another. Biographical information or bits of insight aren’t how-to guides to winning at life. They don’t teach you how inefficient some organizational processes can seem, how to deal with situations that make you feel like your time is being wasted, and how to exercise patience through it all—or that you might just be naïve needing a little more time to sort everything out for your own situation.

I return to the advice tendered to me in those first weeks about learning the organization and running with ideas (which I should add were never actually mutually exclusive tasks). I still don’t have a conclusive answer. Has my time here taught me how to strike a balance between the two? Perhaps. It’s hard to consider now; those early reactions and concerns seem so insignificant. These days I feel content and effective in the work I do while still maintaining my urgent optimism. Conversely, there has been no real change in my daily activities or some delineated process that can explain my transformation—it is my attitude that has shifted. And I suspect that is what experience is.
Endnote

1 To those who feel that library school doesn’t prepare one for professional work: Some of it is very much like all those ill-defined writing assignments in graduate school. The difference is that a professor who can only vaguely explain the parameters of an assignment is the exception, not the rule. No one, in a professional context, tells you how to format your materials or gives you a detailed list of what to include. There’s not an internal publications guide that you can readily follow. You are expected to know how to write and develop your own professional style.
Call for Applications

ARL/Music Library Association Diversity and Inclusion Initiative

Overview

Librarians from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds are underrepresented within the field of music and performing arts librarianship.

With funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the Association of Research Libraries (ARL)/Music Library Association (MLA) Diversity and Inclusion Initiative (DII) seeks to address the growing need for professional staff in music and performing arts libraries who better reflect evolving demographics of students and faculty in music and performing arts higher education.

ARL and MLA—along with partner libraries including the University at Buffalo, SUNY; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; University of North Texas; and University of Pittsburgh—seek to recruit students from traditionally underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups to participate in this three-year program. The goal of the ARL/MLA DII is to create a diverse and well-qualified cohort of new LIS professionals equipped with skills, knowledge, and abilities to address the transformative professional roles in music and performing arts libraries in the 21st century.

The ARL/MLA DII provides generous financial support for minority candidates to pursue the master’s in library and information science degree while gaining valuable, “hands-on” experience in a large academic music library environment. Through programmatic activity, participants will receive additional support to ensure a successful transition into the professional LIS workforce. As Marianne I. Gaunt, Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian, Rutgers University, and member of the ARL Committee on Diversity and Leadership, noted, “It’s a great collaboration in an important area. There is so much creative work happening in music and the performing arts that we need a well-prepared, diverse cadre of librarians ready to enhance library services for this community!”

For additional information about the DII and links to the application form, please see: