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Something Else They Didn't Teach Us: Management Education for Non-Traditional Managers. The Case of Library Directors

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Something Else They Didn't Teach Us: Management Education for Non-Traditional Managers. The Case of Library Directors

PANEL THEME – ABSTRACT

This panel theme has evolved from a broader research agenda on defining and understanding the process of educating the individuals who hold management positions in non-traditional businesses. Examples of such non-traditional business managers, and the graduate degrees they hold, include: Library Directors (MLS), Pastors (M.Div), Primary and Secondary School Principals (Ed.D), Museum Directors (MFA), College Provosts and Presidents (Ph.D.) and Physicians (M.D.).

The academic preparation for an individual earning a discipline-specific degree, as described above, is fundamentally different from that taken by the individual who has sought an advanced degree in management with the intention of assuming a leadership role within *any* industry. The Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree is the terminal degree that prepares an individual to be a manager regardless of discipline.

The Library Director position is the prevalent managerial position within the library profession. Librarians work in a broad range of institutions and perform a broad range of functions; in the performance of these multitudinous functions there exists the role of management. Library directors must deal with all the personnel decisions related to full-time, hourly and student employees. Depending on the organizational structure of their institutions, they must work with union employees and/or non-union employees. They must be aware of the range of human resource related topics, such as reasonable accommodation, sexual harassment, fair labor standards, equal employment opportunity provisions, and more. (Mackenzie and Smith 2007).

Where do library directors, and the librarians who perform various management functions as part of their work, receive their management training? A review of the curricula of 48 MLIS programs accredited by the American Library Association (ALA) revealed that, for the most part, library managers receive their management training while on the job. Of the programs reviewed in this study, 43.8% did not require a management-related course within its degree requirements. And 81.3% of the programs did not require an internship. (Mackenzie and Smith 2007)

An examination of graduate level course syllabi within the ALA accredited library programs revealed that only 58.3% of the management courses included human resource management and only 54.2% included strategy, planning and process. This suggests that the library profession has not yet agreed upon the requirements for preparing future librarians for managerial positions. (Mackenzie and Smith 2007). The results of a recent empirical study revealed that 55.1% of library directors surveyed stated that graduate library school did *not* properly prepare them to be library directors.

A review of the recently published professional literature suggests that the library profession is not alone in its concern regarding a lack of management training in its master-level programs. Problems with Master of Fine Arts (MFA) programs, Master of Social Work (MSW) programs, and wildlife student programs, have all been topics of articles. All the authors share a common concern; that newly educated professionals lack adequate training in subject areas involving crucial management skills. (Nesoff 2007, Kroll 2007, Rhine 2007).

There has been little specifically written on the professional development of library directors. Journal articles and monographs found on this topic primarily originate with the ALA. Browsing the ALA Editions publications collection reveals a subject classification of "Administration and Management." However, most of the titles in this class refer to the management of technology,

collections, customers, funding agencies, trustees, assessment demands, and intellectual property. The focus on the management of people, as a traditional manager, is a sub-focus even within this venue.

There are, encouragingly, relevant titles that support the view that library directors are traditional managers and require skill and knowledge development in that arena (Giesecke 2001, Montgomery & Cook 2005, Weingand 2001.) Similar is the viewpoint that the information field has been dissatisfied with the education emerging from library and information science programs (Koenig 2007, Nichols and Koenig 2005).

The results of recent research will introduce the panel topic to the audience. The focus of the panelists will be on the following topics: Management education, Library School education, the role of traditional managers, and the role of library directors.

The binding theme is the academic preparation of individuals who choose to enter the field of librarianship and in turn assume *management positions*.

The panel session will begin with a brief description of the panel's overall theme and its relevance and importance to the broader NEDSI community. This will set the stage and provide context to the individual panelist backgrounds. The panel session will combine a presentation of the cited studies, but the focus will be the discussion among the panelists and the audience. The expertise of this panel draws together the needs of the employer, the needs of the non-traditional manager, and the providers of academic preparation. The panelists offer varying viewpoints and perspectives into this topic.

The panel includes the following experts:

Dr. Maureen Mackenzie

Areas of expertise: MBA Education

Affiliation: Dowling College, Management education

Dr. James P. Smith

Areas of expertise: Library Management

Affiliation: St. Francis College. Director of the St. Francis College Library

Dr. Michael Koenig

Area of expertise: Library School Education

Affiliation: Palmer School of Library Science, Long Island University

Ms. Lauren Spatig, MBA

Area of expertise: Corporate Management, Employer needs

Affiliation: Allstate Insurance Company and Fielding Graduate Institute

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