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The 2014 Leadership Academy: Six Months Out - How are Participants Using what they Learned?

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From left to right: Susan David DeMaine, Valerie Aggerbeck, Jacob Sayward, Michelle Hook Dewey, Ellen Richardson, and Julie Graves Krishnaswami



The 2014 Leadership Academy: Six Months Out

How are participants using what they learned?

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”
– John Quincy Adams

These wise words were one of many lessons that the attendees of the 2014 AALL Leadership Academy took home with them following two full days of hands-on learning this past April. Now, a little more than six months later, *Spectrum* catches up with a few of the Academy attendees to find out how they are using what they learned and the ways that the Academy has affected their professional (and personal) lives.

Other contributors excised for reader's convenience.

Know Thyself, Know Others

By **Susan David DeMaine**, *Research and Instructional Services Librarian, Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law, Ruth Lilly Law Library, Indianapolis*



Much of what I gained from the 2014 AALL Leadership Academy revolves around a new awareness of how much feelings matter, even

when we do not want them to. All of us communicate in ways that seem appropriate to us individually and act according to our own values, but this does not necessarily jive with the communication attributes and values of others. Regardless of rank or

responsibility, we can all improve our leadership capabilities by building on what we learn when we observe how others (as opposed to ourselves) feel and communicate.

Understanding Others' Communication Styles

At the Leadership Academy we discussed the finding that, in any communication, we derive 55 percent of the meaning we glean from what we see, 38 percent from what we hear, and only 7 percent from actual words. How we carry ourselves,

how our facial expressions shift, and how our tone of voice and volume modulate have a far greater effect on the meaning we convey than our words do.

We undertook exercises to gain insight into our own communication style, and I learned that I am an “Expressive”—more assertive with my ideas on the assertiveness scale and more responsive to others on the responsiveness scale. This is all well and good but did not come as any real surprise to me. The insights that have proven more valuable over the long term

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happened when I started thinking about where my colleagues would fall in the communication-styles matrix and how I could use that knowledge to build stronger and more productive relationships. For example, the realization that my supervisor is a “Driver” (more assertive and less responsive) might prompt me to focus on results and outcomes rather than consensus-building and process. The realization that my peer is an “Amiable” (less assertive and more responsive) might prompt me to run some interference between peer and supervisor to help bridge communication gaps and build better productivity in the end.

I have used the insights I gained from the communication-styles matrix on numerous occasions.

Networking

I attended the AALL Annual Meeting for the third time this past summer, and it was the first time that I felt truly comfortable, like I belonged. Reflecting on this, I realized that I knew at least one person just about everywhere I went, and many of them were people I had met or gotten to know better at the Leadership Academy. Unlike a reception or a cocktail party, the Leadership Academy created an environment that fostered true networking. We had

enough time, structure, and guidance to discuss real questions, to listen and observe other people, and to work together to solve problems—the kinds of experiences that create lasting connections. I have since had further conversations with other members of the Leadership Academy, sought advice, and worked on joint undertakings.

I also gained a mentor who is committed to the mentoring process, experienced in law librarian leadership, and dedicated to having an ongoing discussion with me. Our phone calls have covered questions of leadership in the profession, on our campuses, in our law schools, and in our libraries. The best part is that these conversations result in answers or ideas that are specific to my situation. In short, I have the confidential ear of a longtime leader in law librarianship who has the wisdom of an arm’s-length view. ■