

From Zero to Sixty in Under One Year: A Practical Approach to Building New Programs and Services, Managing Change, and Embracing Innovation as a New Library Administrator

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Introduction

Congratulations! You just got a promotion as a new Assistant/Associate Dean or University Librarian! Now what? If you're like most of us, this is a time of feeling overwhelmed and excited at the same time. You may also be faced with one of two situations-you are starting everything from scratch in a brand new place and position or you are replacing someone who has left a long legacy behind which must now be updated.

In fact, Barbara Dewey states that "new leaders obviously throw the library into a state of transition" (2012, 134). She continues by discussing that many new leaders make some common mistakes such as not taking the time to listen upon entering the new job, failing to have a vision, and attempting too much too quickly (2012, 137). Similarly, Manness and Culshaw caution that "changes in duties, status, and perception can be difficult challenges for employees, supervisors, and managers alike" (2015, 26). Sarah Michalak provides hope that "a transformed library is able to benefit from one person with a great idea and a willingness to lead from within to create change" (2012, 421). She focuses more on the individual's ability and inclination to effectuate change at any level as part of the broader institution. Maggie Ferrell urges leaders to "learn from their experiences and recognize their skill gaps to strengthen their ability to direct organizations" (Leadership mistakes, 2013, 449).

All of these authors point to the often unsettling elements of the current forces at play in the higher education landscape and, more importantly, to the people who are seen as catalysts for this change. Having an awareness that this new role you occupy will naturally be perceived as an agent of change, is only half the equation. Knowing how to leverage that position into one that builds trust, inspiration, and charts a course for transformational experiences both at the institutional level and beyond, is quite another story. Much of the existing literature is dedicated to the big picture such as talent management, effectuating change, and encouraging innovation within your library. But there is scarce information related to the day to day decision factors and actual activities you can undertake as a new library administrator to expand your own capacity for fostering positive change while keeping these larger trends and tensions at the forefront of strategic wayfinding.

This article seeks to help first time administrators grapple with the issues they will most likely face, and is divided into categories intended to highlight the key challenges and decision factors needed in order to successfully navigate areas such as:

- How to connect with those whom you supervise and those to whom you report
- How to engage in effective day to day management activities and strategic planning
- How to build partnerships both internally and externally
- How to measure the impact of all of this work

Although the following section situates these challenges within the author's specific institutional context at a large academic library, they are applicable to any type of leadership context or situation.

Institutional Context

Oklahoma State University (OSU) has been classified as a research university with high research activity. The total student population at OSU's primary campus in Stillwater, Oklahoma is approximately 24,000, with an undergraduate population of approximately 20,000. Edmon Low Library is the primary library on campus and is used by undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty. The library has traditionally enjoyed a reputation on campus for being a welcoming space and supporting student needs. The Research & Learning Services (RLS) division of the library includes an associate dean, ten librarians, six of which are liaisons, one is the director of the liaison program, two are directors of undergraduate/graduate student outreach, instruction and research respectively, and a First Year Experience Librarian. The division also includes an instructional developer and a faculty coordinator for Undergraduate Outreach as well as two graduate student assistants and an intern.

Naturally, as trends have evolved, the library recognized a need for change as well, and under the leadership of the dean, the library began a multi-year re-organizational process which resulted in new departmental re-alignments as well as the identification of new library-wide priorities. A new Associate Dean for Research and Learning Services was hired in Fall of 2014 and was tasked with several action items as a result of the library's recent re-organization under the newly formed division: (<http://info.library.okstate.edu/RLS>):

- Develop a new Academic Liaison Program that defines the notion of what it means to be "engaged" as a liaisons
- Create a systematic way to positively engage faculty, staff, and students outside of the classroom and provide targeted programming, services and support that will focus on all aspects of how our collective community perceives and interacts with the library
- Implement internal processes for evaluation, innovation, professional development and scholarship that enable a flexible, cutting-edge approach to daily work and longer-term planning

These objectives entailed dealing with other related initiatives in order to lay the groundwork and these processes are still continuing to evolve:

1. Re-defining a program for both first year and subject specific instruction and integrating it within the general education program of the institution

2. Re-designing research support services to include less time spent on the desk and greater utilization of tools such as online appointment scheduling and chat, in addition to focusing on new directions in research data services, scholarly communications, and digital projects
3. Developing strong internal and external partnerships in order to facilitate outreach efforts as well as build momentum and support for collaborative projects and initiatives
4. Shifting collection development duties from buying resources to reach a specific dollar amount to analyzing the collections and communicating with departments in order to better focus energies and expertise into building strong collections that can support the general needs of digital scholarship activities with targeted discipline-specific assets
5. Providing systematic and ongoing internal training in areas such as data management and data information literacy, open access, tools such as ORCID and Altmetric, and the new Framework for Information Literacy
6. Updating existing primary assignments to provide a way to determine our impact on university-wide strategic goals such as student learning and faculty productivity

Challenges and Decision Factors

The discussion that follows includes a combination of information from the existing literature on library management, general tips, and specific examples from the author's own experiences at Oklahoma State University.

Starting from the ground up: Individual interviews and overall needs assessment

The most important thing a new administrator can do is learn about his or her immediate environment. Make a stakeholder map so that you know who you absolutely need to include in your meeting requests and think about why they might be important to your new role. It's great to say you're meeting the Provost, but having a clear idea of why that's important will be useful. In fact, Steven Staninger states that "an unwillingness to involve stakeholders in decisions" is an indicator of ineffective leadership which can be just as much about the presence of negative elements as much as positive ones (2011, 1). Similarly, Maggie Farrell asserts that listening is a critical skill as part of the leader's arsenal of management resources (*A leader's toolbelt*, 2015, 640).

Have a specific set of questions prepared to help you start the conversation. Each interview will obviously depend on who you are speaking with and that will shape the types of questions you will ask. For example, you might ask a librarian you supervise what he/she enjoys about the job and what things might be changed. Or you might be talking with a high level administrator in which case you'll want to get a sense if there's been collaboration with the library in the past and if so, what did that look like and in what direction do you want to move towards?

In addition to knowing what you want to ask, you should try to find out ahead of time as much information about the interviewee as possible. Check out webpages and profiles and know with whom you are talking and why. There's nothing worse than requesting a meeting

without a clear purpose and little information to go on. If possible, schedule the session at that person's office so that you are meeting in his/her space and conveying your willingness to meet people where they are and make them comfortable.

Take notes! This sounds obvious, but it's amazing how much you can forget even a few days after the meeting is over and you might be left scrambling to remember exactly what the person said. Once you have your notes, examine them and identify patterns that emerge. That will help you craft a strategy for next steps and identify areas of both short and long-term planning.

Another final tip is to follow-up no more than a few days after your meeting. Even if it's someone you see every day, taking the time to summarize your conversation and outlining action items lets him/her know that you paid attention to the discussion and will do something about the issues that were identified.

Planning strategies: Setting the stage for success

The art of being any administrator entails dealing with both day-to-day operational issues and having that driving vision for the long term while constantly balancing the two. Being expected to either create something entirely new or change a structure that has been in place for a long time is a difficult job and you will face various levels of anxiety and even opposition.

1. Setting up the infrastructure to facilitate change

The easiest way to think about this is to ask yourself what you can do to help those whom you supervise whether it's providing training, a new image for your unit or simply access to collaborative opportunities that did not exist before. In other words, what conditions need to exist (knowledge, resources, relationships) so that the librarians, staff, and students in your area can be successful?

The way in which this is accomplished will greatly depend on your own managerial style, the size of your unit or library and the scope and scale of the activities you are planning. If possible, start with your end goal in mind so that you know where you want to be 2-3 years out and work backwards so that you can decide what steps along the way need to be taken and who from within the library and the campus you will need to work with to move forward. For example, if you want to establish a new data management program, perhaps some training will be needed for those offering the services and that also has to be built into your planning. And of course time unfortunately does not stand still, and you will still be doing things the "old" way even as you are planning the "new" one until you completely switch over. But the important thing to keep in mind here is that you need to know what your broad goals are and how to achieve them, even if at this point it's still all in theory.

In the case of OSU, we literally had to take down existing models for reference, collection development and instruction and replace them with new ones in data management, scholarly communications, and outreach. This work is still very much in progress, but through the interview process mentioned above and several rounds of discussions, it became evident that we could not simply tweak what was already there,

but rather we needed to re-build it. The process consisted of the initial face to face meetings between the new associate dean and each member of the RLS Division. After the associate dean felt she had enough information to determine what the main problem areas were, she called an initial division-wide meeting to begin building the team identity.

During that meeting, and to increase group buy-in, the associate dean asked the division to break up into four functional groups based on the main areas of focus: Instruction Services, Research Services, Emerging Technologies, User Experience and Innovation.

Each group was responsible for writing a report that was presented to the library administrative team. Reports contained the following information:

- Strategic goals and outcomes
- An implementation plan i.e.-the initiatives/activities that will accomplish these goals/outcomes (including partnerships, etc.)
- Performance metrics, impact and targets (how do we know we successfully accomplished the goals/outcomes)
- Strategy for disseminating information to campus, etc.

The associate dean analyzed the other areas that affected everyone in the division separately:

- Scheduling divisional communication and information sharing consisting of regular divisional meetings, individual meetings with direct reports, and once a semester meetings with indirect reports
- Developing a formal training program that includes regularly scheduled workshops and meetings as well as online resources and tools
- Developing a unified web presence which includes marketing tools, liaison profiles, consultation scheduling, etc.
- Updating job descriptions and ways to measure impact

Once the associate dean received the information from the reports, she was able to continue with the planning stages and determined that a two-day retreat was needed in order to finalize the division's strategic plan and continue to build team identity:

- Day one consisted of discussing the logistical components of the plans the groups had put together in addition to the elements the associate dean had worked on (communication, training, etc.)
- Day two consisted of working through the Strengths Finder assessment from Gallup and crafting a draft strategic plan for the next two academic years that would serve as a broad guiding document under which specific initiatives would be housed that related directly to the work the division had engaged in over the past year. This assessment entails answering questions geared towards uncovering "talent themes," or strengths, which range from analytical, to strategic, and empathy. Gallup defines talents as "naturally recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior" (2016). This type of assessment can assist at an organizational level by identifying areas in which group members are collectively the strongest and where gaps might be addressed.

2. Dealing with personnel issues and change management: Coach, mentor, and miracle worker

Personnel problems are going to exist at all levels of administration. As you move up the ranks however, you will find yourself dealing with different types of issues than you might when starting out as a team leader or department head. Whereas you may have dealt with more behavior or performance-based issues when you were supervising fewer people, you will find that as an Associate Dean or University Librarian, less and less of the operational type of problems will come your way. Maggie Farrell points out that “leaders who are administrators will note that they are more removed from the daily operations in how the work is accomplished” (Lifecycle of library leadership, 2013, 262)

Instead, you will probably deal with the larger issues of how to best support those who are the managers who report directly to you and how to cope with library-wide change management. In the first instance, your role will mainly be of coach and mentor. You will need to ensure that the managers below you have everything they need in order to succeed. This may take the form of more formalized training, such as the Harvard Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians, as well as a combination of less formalized coaching and mentoring activities.

As with all things, this will take time and you will have to do some needs assessment prior to establishing a process that works well for you and those whom you are coaching. A quick questionnaire asking people how they prefer to receive feedback and information from you as well as their own goals as managers and leaders will be important first steps towards establishing that dynamic. This will also help you establish to what degree someone is more or less independent. Based on your impressions, you should be able to answer questions such as:

- To what degree does the individual possess the knowledge and skills to effectively carry out this particular task or activity?
- To what degree is the individual enthusiastic about the work?
- What management style would work best for this situation?

Broader change management is also difficult to handle successfully. Inclusiveness and transparency are key to helping you set the groundwork for success. Here, the work of George Kotter echoes some of the issues that have been discussed. You will never make everyone happy, so you will have to decide what you want to focus on and what your/the administration’s priorities are. You will have to have difficult conversations and try to frame individual decisions within the larger context in which they are occurring. If the groundwork has already been laid before your arrival, people will not be surprised when changes begin to occur. If, on the other hand, your arrival IS the change, you will have to work harder and keep the following things in mind:

- You can have a process vision as much as a “thing” vision. Not only will you need to know where you are going as a whole, but you’ll most likely want to chart out how you will get there. As discussed in the previous section, you will have to work

backwards from your final goal and determine what the interim steps will be along the way. This also will require planning and thinking strategically about who needs to be at the table, what resources are needed and what obstacles you might encounter. You will have to make some decisions on your own, but if at all possible involve those who are part of the change as much as you can. Let them address the challenges you're facing as a team and give them an opportunity to provide solutions. Even if you don't end up following their suggestions completely, simply involving those whom you supervise in the process will go a long way towards helping you achieve your goals.

- Test out to see who is willing to help you. You will know fairly quickly who is supportive both internally and externally. But just as it's true that you will not be able to please everyone, it's also true that you don't need everyone on board to make things happen. Think about the minimum number of people or positions you will need to establish success and what that means. If out of a group of say 30 liaison librarians, 20 of them are fine with what you want to do but the remaining 10 aren't, is that ok? Can you get along without the support of those 10? What about campus partners? If the office of the Vice President for Research is not necessarily standing in your way but isn't enthusiastic either, can you move your initiatives forward? If the answer to these questions is yes, then you don't have to wait for every single person to approve, because chances are they won't.
- Differentiate types of problems. Are they something that can be solved by changing a process or policy vs with a person or something else? Knowing what the true issue is will help you determine how to solve it. Sometimes you will be able to move people into different positions and sometimes not, so you will have to be prepared with a backup plan in case that "problem person" cannot be shifted elsewhere. Changing a policy or a process might be easier to do than trying to work around someone who is not being a team player.
- As difficult as it is, focus on listening and learning everything you can about your environment, the institutional culture, and political landscape. Don't try to fix anything too quickly because it likely won't work and you will end up frustrating both yourself and those around you, or worse, you might irritate the very people whom you hope to win over. As an example, the associate dean knew that getting the campus to change its general education designation to include Information Literacy as a formal element would not work based on her conversations with campus administration. But that did not mean that they couldn't allow for the library's instructional program to be included in the general reporting of assessment results. She worked closely with the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs who provided guidance about who needed to be in on the conversation and how to best approach the issue.

As a result, what the library wanted to do was viewed as a positive move because there had been no access to such information in previous years, and since the library was doing all the work without really changing any existing policies, this was considered a low-stakes activity and was approved. In other words, this was a win-win situation-it will allow campus to get an idea of students' information literacy skills and will provide more impetus for the library to assess outcomes in a more systematic and programmatic fashion than simply relying on course-based data that may or may not inform broader efforts.

- If you think you sound like a presidential candidate when you promise your group that things will be better, that's great. But whatever you do, keep those promises and deliver on your commitments. There's nothing worse than promising what you cannot accomplish especially as a new addition to the institution. Start small, win small victories and the bigger issues will follow. If the dean is known for saying no to something, would he/she say yes to one part of that something? Think about piloting a new program and service to see how things go first before implementing something that will have a lasting impact especially if you're not sure of its feasibility. But even if something fails, the fact that you carried through on your promise will go a long way towards establishing your credibility and integrity as an administrator.

3. Stuck in the middle

Finding the right balance between working with those whom you supervise and your boss may seem like having to choose between a rock and a hard place. Maggie Farrell asserts that no matter what your position in an organization is, you are always reporting to some other, higher, authority, whether it is a provost, president, or board. (Leadership reflections, 2014, 692). This means that you always have to think of all of the perspectives surrounding you, and you must be able to effectuate and communicate both operational changes as well as strategic ones as you move between these worlds.

But there are some ways you can maintain and succeed in this delicate position even while you (try) to maintain your own sanity:

- Be a facilitator for both your supervisees and your supervisor. Think of ways you can make their jobs easier and make them look as good as possible. If you're expecting for someone to pat you on the back, don't hold your breath. Being a middle manager is not for the faint of heart as you may start to feel like you've got the most thankless job of all especially as you listen to gripes from those who work for you and those who work above you-often about each other! Your job is not to play peacekeeper, but it is make sure that each side is aware of what's going on at a level that's appropriate for them and that each of them feels that you are making a best faith effort to let them be heard, understood, and appreciated. Under no circumstances should you criticize one to the other because it will come back to hurt you in the end and in spite of your best efforts, you will come across as being a "traitor" or a "lackey". As in all things managerial, you have to stay true to yourself and strive for transparency and integrity in your actions.
- Part of all of this discussion involves the kind of relationship you have with your immediate supervisor. No matter what you do, you will have to figure out how to communicate with him/her and how to best deal with that person's managerial style for both day to day tasks and longer-term planning. Some deans don't mind being stopped in the hallway for a quick chat, while others prefer a more formal meeting to talk. Don't be too overly dependent, but don't go roughshod either. Like it or not, as much as you have control over some decisions, you still have to make sure that your immediate boss is at least aware of what you're doing, if not completely sanctioning your plans. If you're planning big ticket changes, that person will have to be on board

to support you with resources, campus politics, and working through any personnel issues that will arise based on what you're planning. That means you may have to employ some of the same tactics as when doing outreach to outside library groups to convince your supervisor about the value of your ideas, especially if they are counter to the culture or the way "things have always been done".

4. Balancing the day to day with longer term projects

This may seem like an obvious area to figure out, but it's harder than you think. Your strategic plan should guide the major projects your division undertakes each year. But as we all know, things come up! One thing you can try to do is think about the major projects you want to work on for that year that require your coordination. This way you will determine who needs to be involved, what their role will be, and if anyone wants to know what you're up to, you have a quick way to summarize your activities. In addition, this will allow you to decide what, if any, new projects are feasible for you to take on as unexpected opportunities arise and you evaluate whether or not they can wait or they need to be folded into your workflows.

You can let your department heads worry about the day to day items in their areas. If your institution is anything like OSU, you probably won't know what every person is working on all the time, but in talking with your managers, you will be able to get a feel for what's going on. In addition, scheduling a meeting with your indirect reports on a regular basis will also help you get a feel for the unit's activities and address any issues that arise.

Finally, collecting data on your unit's activities on a regular basis will allow you to track progress of various initiatives over time and establish benchmarks for your high-level goals. More on this in the Measuring Impact section.

As an example, in 2016 the RLS Division has four major projects going on:

- A data management needs assessment project where we are interviewing faculty about their data activities to help us better develop meaningful services to support them
- Curriculum mapping project to determine in which subject specific courses we have an instructional presence and in which courses we should
- The development of online tutorials for our first year instruction program
- Research data services pilot in the form of:
 - Workshops: <http://info.library.okstate.edu/RLS/workshops>
 - Web presence development: <http://www.library.okstate.edu/research-support/research-data-services/>

All of these require various forms of planning and each one is being overseen by a different group of people which means the associate dean needs to check in with them on a regular basis, offer support where needed, and make sure that things are progressing along in addition to writing yearly evaluations, scheduling other regular

meetings, and dealing with her own list of priorities. In some instances, you will be the one coordinating the project in which case it gets a little easier because you can control activities and timelines. In others, you will have to delegate and leave the project management to the team leader.

Establishing effective communication and management: Meetings and other fun activities

How you communicate with your colleagues is very much a personal preference and there is certainly no one way to go about this. But there are still a few general things to think about as you begin to shape your leadership and managerial style.

1. Meetings

Think about who you need to meet with and how often. You will most likely have a wide variety of meetings to deal with, both individual and group. Find out if there are already set meeting times and committees so that you can work around them and if they are part of your areas of responsibility, decide if you need to change them in any way.

Plan for time after each meeting to go over your notes and follow-up on anything that can be taken care of. You'll find that as the administrator, things may come up that didn't before simply because you're the person in charge of them. Rarely will you go to a meeting where you come away with nothing on your list, especially if you are the one calling it. Be prepared to have extra work generated as a result of your discussion.

Send agendas ahead of time and solicit agenda items early. There's nothing worse than getting a lengthy agenda the day of the meeting with lots of discussion points and action items. Worse yet, if you expect the people at the meeting to contribute, you have to plan ahead and make sure they know what's expected of them and you have to ensure they have enough time to think about the issues you're presenting.

Send out action items in a timely manner and get them done. If possible, try to follow-up from your meeting the same day so that you don't forget to add things to your ever growing to do list.

2. Emails

Try to make the most of your messages by having a clear subject heading and purpose. Are you requesting additional information or do you need an action item to be completed? With calendar and email technology being so inextricably linked, you can use the functionality of one to help with the other. Send out meeting schedules with the agendas as part of the body of the meeting request to save time and include all the necessary information. You can do the same thing after the meeting to send your notes and action items. Email is also great for confirming face to face conversations especially where personnel issues are in play or someone is being evasive and you want to make sure you clarify your understanding of the discussion and document what was said.

Without getting too far into the depths of email etiquette, just remember that what you say can and will be used against you if the situation ever arises. Write each message as though someone else is going to read it and you'll be fine. While it may be tempting to send out that "nastygram" message where you make your frustrations known, think very carefully about the long lasting effects of that action. You don't want to engage in an email cross-fire with a colleague for something that can be dealt with more effectively in person. In addition, you would never want your position as an administrator to be called into question or be seen as abusing power because you are berating someone who reports to you via a medium where messages can easily be misconstrued and shared outside of their immediate contexts. If you absolutely feel the need to say something in writing, take some time to craft a draft you feel comfortable with and one that is stripped of inflammatory comments and opinions. Stick to the facts and what you want to happen as a result of your message rather than making it appear as though you are "yelling" at someone in writing.

Response times vary-we often have one of two ways to respond. We either hit reply immediately when we should've probably waited a little longer, or we set the message aside as an item to work on later and it never resurfaces from the long list of other messages that have piled up. If you don't have time to respond to something immediately, tag that message as unread as a quick way to filter items you need to get back to when you do have additional time. Conversely, if you are responding to someone else's message, write a draft in a new window to avoid sending the message by accident and then let it sit overnight to make sure you're saying exactly what you intend. Unless something needs a truly immediate response, waiting can often give you a fresh perspective.

[Building Partnerships: Taking your message on the road](#)

1. Campus Discussions

An important element to consider is that of how you want external (potential) partners to view you. Ideally, you are going to be seen on equal footing, not simply providing a service, but actually collaborating with them in order to effectuate change. A recent article by Nicole Pagowsky discusses the notion that too often librarians approach collaboration from a support rather than a partnership perspective. Although her scope is more narrow in terms of focusing on how we can work together with faculty in instruction, the point is well made that librarians have taken a more passive and arguably even submissive role in terms of being viewed as a support service as opposed to a collaborator (2015, 140).

Part of the issue can be fixed by the language we use-services, support, instead of partnership, collaboration. So you will want to make sure that all of your promotional items speak to that relationship as one of mutual benefit. As Joan Giesecke notes, "One thing collaborations have in common is that the individuals recognize that they cannot solve a problem or create a new enterprise on their own" (2012, 39). Another way to help alleviate this issue is to ensure that as you begin to approach the various individuals and groups on campus with whom you want to work, that you make your role in the process as clear as possible. All of your introductory messages should have some explanation as to your desire

to partner and most importantly, what can be gained by such a collaboration. When meeting with these entities, keep the same purpose at the forefront of the conversation and use language that exudes confidence even if you aren't entirely sure what you can bring to the table. Chances are you still have more information about the issues at hand than they do, and you will be surprised at how many areas on campus lack the same resources you do and would be more than happy to work together.

Keeping all of that in mind, it's time to put on your used car salesman's hat! Sherrie Bergman mentions that new library directors "will benefit from taking the initiative to make connections with other departments not only to receive practical information but also to cultivate a sense of community with and sometimes among other administrators" (p.160). She then cites nine steps that new library administrators can take in order to make this outreach as effective as possible that range from meeting people and learning about what they are doing to asking how the library can assist with the priorities of a particular college or department (2001, 165-176)

Sometimes, one on one meetings are not the best way to reach a larger group of people and you will have to go to the dreaded departmental or group meeting. This is exactly what we did at OSU. The associate dean went with each liaison to his/her departmental meetings to personally introduce changes in the division and the library. We felt these changes were important enough to warrant this individualized attention given that they represented a major shift in our direction and focus and would help pave the way for future conversations. Each visit consisted of a brief 5-10 minute presentation to each department along with a professional one-page handout with all the details. We had no other goal than to raise awareness of the changes that were coming up and provide an opportunity for faculty to think of us in a new light. Although it was time consuming, this quick face-to-face introduction has strengthened existing relationships with liaison areas and provided an opportunity to visit departments who had previously never invited a librarian to their meetings.

Another relatively easy way to make introductions is to host a reception in the library. This can be targeted to specific groups or have it be open to the entire campus. The key with this type of event is to make it as social as possible and not set some kind of outreach agenda ahead of time. At OSU, we did this in early Spring of 2016 and had over 50 faculty attendees. We offered heavy hors d'oeuvres and alcoholic beverages and marketed it as a meet and greet type of event for the library and campus faculty via our faculty newsletter, our website, and our liaisons.

We asked for RSVP's, but beyond that, we kept it very informal and focused on getting to know each other better. Since that event, we're planning another targeted reception, and we've had several faculty email us to thank us for hosting a fun, low-key evening where they could mingle with their colleagues. Which leads us to the final point, make sure you follow-up and thank all those who attended. That's your best bet to get a response and continue building the relationships that were initiated.

2. Working with Donors and Fundraising

As part of your new position, you may have a role in working with your library's existing donor base. In that case, you will have to work within whatever confines exist given your environment as well as your dean or university librarian's current expectations in that area. For example, you may have to attend library board or friends of the library meetings, collaborate with individual donors on specific projects, or simply steward funds that have already been allocated for a program or project.

But you may also find yourself in a position where you will be expected to create or grow a donor base and work towards finding alternative funding sources especially in these times of decreasing budgets and shrinking state support for higher education in general. The ALA Frontline Fundraising Toolkit can be a powerful tool to help you determine where to begin.

The toolkit walks through several steps needed in order to initiate these activities (2011, 4-11):

- Identify priorities and costs
- Develop your proposals and what you are asking for
- Identify prospects (alumni, community members, etc.) and continue cultivating existing relationships via events, involvement in library initiatives, and other opportunities
- Track and maintain your interactions with your donor base
- Understand the different types of giving opportunities from planned giving to fundraising campaigns and more individualized donations
- Have a clear marketing and communication strategy so that you can speak about your plans at any time and can quickly spread the word about them as well
- Measure success and ensure responsible stewardship of received funds via regular updates and indicators of impact for each initiative

The most important thing to remember is that fundraising is not about money, at least not primarily. It's about building relationships and offering a message about the library that resonates with potential donors. If they don't believe that what you are doing is important, they are much less likely to give money to the library regardless of how wonderful your proposal may be. As a result, communicating the value of your initiatives and establishing effective outreach methods are even more important as your reach expands beyond campus. As a side note, if your library currently does not have a development officer who can coordinate some of this work, and you have the ability to hire one, this type of position will be very helpful in establishing some of the processes and policies as you move forward.

3. Internal Conversations

Internal partnerships are just as difficult to effectuate as external ones. Just because you've gotten to work with a specific person or department within the library, does not automatically mean that area will want to collaborate with you on a more strategic level. You can approach working with colleagues in a very similar manner to how you would handle working with

other partners. They have to understand what you're trying to accomplish and how working together will benefit them as well as you. Rarely will you have a department offer resources and staffing towards something they don't see providing any return for them unless they are mandated to do so. So, you will have to "sell" your ideas to them as much as to external collaborators and make sure you are all on the same page.

If your colleagues have no idea what your initiatives are all about, now is the time to change that. Don't assume that others in the library know (or care) about your particular division and its directions. What you do have to determine however, is who in the library can help you with your work, either from a partnership perspective (i.e. because they work closely with the dean, etc.) or simply from a functional one (i.e. you need them in order to do your work, like a web administrator or the Systems Department).

[Building your team: Encouraging innovation and developing a programmatic approach to training and recognition](#)

All of this work would not be possible without a group of dedicated faculty, staff, and students who share your vision and motivation for change. Making sure that they are just as excited about the work ahead as you are is a key element to your success, and ultimately the success of the library. There are two main areas to consider as you think through your options for this approach:

1. Promoting library-wide innovation and development

At OSU, we recognized early on that while each department had its own process for professional development opportunities, we did not have a library-wide approach that would allow all of us to take a collective step back and work together on issues of importance such as creativity, leadership, and communication. Enter the Leadership Bootcamp, a week-long set of sessions led by faculty and staff from all units. Co-coordinated by the associate dean and the Director of Human Resources in the library, this was a purposeful effort to get everyone invested in the issues discussed.

We had a clear goal in mind that was communicated often, and although participation was not mandatory, it was highly encouraged by all department heads and library administration:

The goals of the Library Leadership Boot Camp include sharing information with Library faculty and staff; identifying positive leadership ideas and characteristics that can be used in day-to-day Library activity; and providing Library faculty and staff with one or two leadership initiatives to implement in their work or workplace.

Each day we featured a new topic for a 2 hour interactive session on:

- Communication
- Strengths and Weaknesses
- Inspiration and Motivation
- Productivity
- Innovation/Creativity

Feedback from our first year was so positive, that we decided to make this event a yearly occurrence with new sessions for each of the main areas listed above. This year, we are adding a new component, “The Next Great Idea Pitch Competition” where we are asking anyone in the library who has an idea for a new service, resource, or project to present it Shark Tank style in order to obtain funding. To date, we have had 8 proposals presented ranging from a formal librarian fellowship program to offering employees time for innovation during work hours.

If this type of effort is not feasible at your library, you can consider smaller scale activities such as idea jams. Coming out of the business world, these sessions are a quick and effective way for employees to share their ideas in a low-stakes environment. Similar to the pitch competition, presenters have a few minutes to describe their concept and receive constructive feedback from the audience to help them build on their initial model. Done correctly, this method can foster creativity and integrate it into the workflow of the department while providing a continuous mechanism for ongoing brainstorming and sharing. You could then decide which of the ideas presented should be developed further and brought to library administration or other campus partners for implementation.

The bottom line is that there are fairly low cost approaches that can yield transformational results. But as the administrator it’s up to you to develop the space for these discussions to occur and be able to act on the items that float to the top. In addition, whatever method you choose, it has to be done consistently and it has to become part of the natural way of doing things, not be seen as yet another meeting employees have to attend before they go back to their daily routines.

A final and important aspect of these innovation activities is to close the loop. Make sure you follow-through on the ideas presented whether they require additional funding or simply some action on your part. You want to have the infrastructure to act before you ask for ideas so that employees feel that their suggestions were not made in vain and something will actually change as a result.

2. Recognition Counts

One of the most important elements of being an administrator is making sure that those within the organization feel their work is noticed and appreciated. Salary goes only so far in making someone feel as though they matter and more often than not, monetary compensation is only part of the equation.

It’s easy to take recognition for granted because we might assume that employees are aware we think they’re doing a good job and sending the all-inclusive “thank you” email is a great first step. But you can do so much more. Begin by asking how people want to be recognized-for some, a simple thank you is enough, while for others, a big show of appreciation means much more than a private word. Knowing what each person prefers will help pave the way for you to give appreciation in a meaningful and heartfelt manner as opposed to assuming you know the answer.

You will also want to build both formal and informal approaches. You may be able to plug into the all-staff recognition luncheon or awards ceremony at the end of the semester and thank your units, departments, etc. with plaques, certificates, or even monetary incentives. But that shouldn't stop you from having events such as departmental lunches on a regular basis to express your appreciation.

Finally, make sure you always have a thank you note or card handy for that on the spot moment when someone does something great and you don't want to wait to send an email. Plus, handwriting something shows that you care far more than typing away on your computer.

Measuring Impact

In today's climate of shrinking resources and shifting library roles, it is imperative to be able to communicate how academic libraries are contributing to the scholarly landscape as catalysts for innovation, change, and transformative experiences both in and out of the classroom. Moreover, libraries have increasingly shaped the broader conversation within the scholarly landscape by helping to pass open access policies, partnering with researchers to provide open content via institutional repositories, and educating faculty about managing their data to comply with federal mandates. But there is little written about how libraries are collecting and disseminating this information in ways that go beyond the simple recording of metrics and annual reports.

Stating that librarians have had x number of consultation is no longer enough to support our claims that we are not only adding value, but in fact playing a key role in the various academic and research activities of our organizations. It is much more difficult to measure and communicate the impact of those activities on strategic directions, and it is more difficult still to do so in a way that garners attention and provides fuel for requesting added resources in times of financial restrictions and calls for stewardship and fiscal responsibility. The work of Megan Oakleaf, Anne Kenney, as well as recent ACRL value reports indicate that libraries are being challenged more than ever to explain how these new dimensions are supporting the student learning and faculty productivity missions of their respective campuses.

In the "Value of the Academic Library" report, Megan Oakleaf states that "Community college, college, and university librarians no longer can rely on their stakeholders' belief in their importance. Rather, they must demonstrate their value" (2010, 11). This issue is so important that she has developed an impact starter toolkit in order to address this issue. Her method offers a way to answer broader questions such as what are faculty, students, etc. able to do as a result of the library service, activity, etc. This is a reflective and continuous cycle and requires not only determining the type and extent of impact but also sharing and communicating that information in a systematic manner (2010, 1). As an administrator, you can use tools such as this one to ensure that that campus administration and other community stakeholders are aware of your work and impact especially during financially difficult times.

Similarly, Anne Kenney wrote a recent piece on the way to measure liaison impact on strategic directions of an institution. Instead of focusing on what the library is doing, we need to

be thinking about how we can leverage the type and quality of impact as opposed to simply measuring the number of instruction sessions taught. “An emerging theme in the development of the liaison model is to shift the focus away from the work of librarians to that of scholars and to develop engagement strategies based on their needs and success indicators” (2014, 4). This is very difficult and elusive and there isn’t a perfect answer for how to do this. But she outlines a few ways to begin measuring this information by creating almost rubric-like goals that allow for benchmarking, measuring the degree of effectiveness and connecting library activities with campus-wide goals as a way to indicate how the library is furthering, and in many cases, transforming, the academic mission of its institution.

At OSU, we decided to tackle these issues at two different levels. The first, related to the way in which we collected what we began to refer to as our “impact data”. Previously, little information was reported beyond what appeared on annual review reports. The information was piecemeal and disjointed and it was difficult to determine what, if any, impact we were having on the campus as a whole beyond anecdotal accounts.

First, we streamlined the collection of this data by creating a spreadsheet where all librarians in the RLS Division had to contribute something. The spreadsheet measured both quantitative elements (number of consultations, instruction sessions, etc.) as well as their qualitative counterparts which detailed the story behind the numbers. Not only did we strive to capture the “what”, but we endeavored to look at the “how”. For example, if a librarian stated he/she had met with a faculty member, information about the purpose and subject of the meeting was also reported. In addition, we also added a more generic section for one-off items that fell outside more traditional activities, but that were still valuable such as specific projects or partnerships.

We collectively agreed upon the categories to be included and we had several discussions about what we meant by “Services” or “Consultations” to ensure that everyone was interpreting the spreadsheet in a similar fashion. In addition, each category was directly mapped onto librarians’ primary assignments so that when the time came to report activities for annual reviews, the same information could be re-purposed and adjusted.

This process allowed librarians to do several things:

1. Streamline the collection of statistics and explanations on an ongoing and regular basis
2. Provide a way to uniformly define activities
3. Provide a way to draw a broad-level composite picture of the unit as a whole and individual librarians as needed
4. Create a centralized location for data collection that could be easily accessed and updated

Step two involved looking outwardly and aligning our efforts with the campus strategic plan. We are still in the process of doing this, but we decided to focus on three broad goals:

1. Improving student learning and retention
2. Increasing faculty productivity
3. Attracting the highest caliber faculty and students

As a next step, we are planning on merging all of the impact spreadsheets from each librarian so that the total numbers and the accompanying activities fit into one of these three areas. Once that step is completed, we plan to synthesize the information into an interactive infographic that can be shared digitally. For each major goal we plan to display the quantitative information and provide a link to a website, video or other appropriate resource to relay the qualitative information that accompanies it.

We hope to be able to utilize this infographic in various venues, not only as a way to highlight what the library is doing, but as a way to assist with new faculty hires and feeling more connected to the culture of the campus as a whole. The broader point to be made here is that as an administrator, you will have to determine how to share the library's activities with campus leadership, potential donors, and other institutions. You will have to be able to answer that ever important questions of "So what?" and "Who cares?" It's not simply about sharing numbers, it's about the story behind them. Not only should there be a focus on the library's point of view, but if you can get others to share how the library shaped their success, that's a powerful message that can truly change the way in which the library is viewed both internally and externally.

Whatever you do, make sure you have this information readily available at all times because you never know when you'll have to print out that graphic, slide, or document.

Conclusion

You've taken a long and winding journey into the world of a new administrator. There is no question that this is one of the many steps you will take as you begin to shape your persona and decide what's really important to you. Here are a few parting thoughts:

1. Be authentic. You have to be honest about who you are as a manager and leader and stay true to that character throughout your career. You will invariably draw from others over time, but the essence of you who are as a person should stay the same if you want to be a role model for positive change. Acting in ways that are beyond your comfort zone, especially for the benefit of others, will only result in frustration on your part and will most like leave those who report to you wondering who you really are and what your agenda is even if you have the best of intentions.
2. Act with integrity. Be as transparent as possible and for every major decision, think about involving those who will be most affected as well as those who will be honest with you in helping you see a path forward. Don't come to the table with preconceived notions about what something should or shouldn't look like.
3. Trust yourself. You know more than you think you do, and you have a great capacity to adapt! You are also not alone and can call on colleagues, the literature, and other institutional examples to help along the way. Everyone faces doubt at times, but knowing what areas where you need some assistance and being confident in your decisions will go a long way towards helping you grow as an administrator.

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