Leading With LLAMA

Emerging Leaders 2011

Melissa Brisbin, Melissa Cardenas-Dow, Janine Golden, Deana Greenfield, Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada, and Tinamarie Vella

Introduction

Emerging Leaders (EL) is a leadership program designed by the *American Library Association* (ALA) with the goal of guiding men and women who are relatively new to librarianship, providing an opportunity to come together through group work, and to develop strategies and methodologies to perform specific tasks. Participants also learn from peers and members of ALA about the value and importance of good leadership skills and how they can apply that knowledge to librarianship.

Who We Are

In October of 2010, LLAMA, the Library Leadership and Management Division of ALA, agreed to sponsor two emerging leaders as it has done in many previous years. LLAMA's Executive Committee first suggested names of LLAMA individuals fitting the EL criteria, and then voted on two candidates. These candidates met in January 2011, at the *ALA Midwinter Meeting* in San Diego, along with the new class for the first time. For LLAMA's project, *Project N,* these five librarians were brought together:

Melissa Brisbin is the Department Head of Technology and Senior Librarian for the *Cape May County Library System* in Cape May, which is in Southern New Jersey. She served as Chair for the *New Members Round Table* (NMRT) Midwinter Social for 2012, is a current member of the *New Jersey Library Association - IT Division*, and participates in the *Library Leadership and Management Association - Association of College and Research Libraries* (LLAMA-ACRL) 2013 Joint Presidential Program Committee. She has also recently spoken on librarianship topics to the NJLA Adult Services Forum, LLAMA's Midwinter conference, NJLA Microconferences, and Handheld Librarian.

Melissa Cardenas-Dow works as an Outreach/Reference Librarian at *University of Redlands Armacost Library* in Southern California. She is also serving as a member of the Continuing Education Committee of the *North American Serials Interest Group* for 2010-2013. Melissa serves as the Library Leadership and Management Association's representative to the *Association of Specialized & Cooperative Library Agencies' Accessibility Assembly* for 2012.

Deana Greenfield is an Assistant Professor at *National Louis University Library* in Chicago, IL. She previously held the position of Library Program Manager for the *NLU Center for Teaching* through Children's Books and served as General Secretary for the *United States Board on Books for Young People* (USBBY). In 2008 she was named an *American Library Association Spectrum Scholar*. She is an *American Library Association* (ALA) Discovering Librarianship field recruiter and currently serves on the *Association of College and Research Libraries* (ACRL) Instruction Section Program Planning committee.

Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada is a Part-Time Young Readers Librarian at *PalosVerdes Library District* and Part-Time Teen Librarian at *Redondo Beach Public Library* in Southern California. Lessa is the Secretary of the *Asian Pacific American Librarians Association* (APALA) and Co-Chair of the *Family Literacy Task Force* which created and maintains the program *Talk Story: Sharing Culture, Sharing History* with the *American Indian Library Association* (AILA). Lessa is also a co-author of *Hawaiians in Los Angeles* from Arcadia Publishing.

Tinamarie Vella works at the *City University of New York* (CUNY) *Graduate School of Journalism Research Center*. Before coming to CUNY, she worked at the *New York City Department of Youth and Community Development*, *Reading and Writing Center at Kingsborough Community College* and the *New York Society Library*. Currently, she is on the *New Members Roundtable* (NMRT), President's Program Planning Committee and *Library Leadership and Management Association* (LLAMA) Task Force on Leadership Education for 2011-2012. She currently serves as the Upcoming Subcommittee Chair & New Member Conference Programmer for the *New Member Engagement Subcommittee* of the *New York Library Association* (NYLA) and also the legislative representative for *NYLA Section on Management of Information Resources and Technology* (SMART).

Figure 1: 2012 Emerging Leaders showcasing our results at a poster session at 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA.

A 3-Year Initiative: Collaboration with Graduate LIS Schools

LLAMA's mission is to encourage and nurture current and future library leaders, and to develop and promote outstanding leadership and management practices. Based on this mission, LLAMA President Janine Golden, serving as Member Guide, and Kerry Ward, LLAMA Executive Director serving as ALA Staff Liaison, created this Emerging Leader Project as a three-year initiative to explore the quality and quantity of LLAMA promotional materials, resources, and professional services as well as their impact on Library and Information Science faculty and students. LLAMA was curious to know if its current marketing strategy was reaching LIS faculty and future library professionals. Questions were concerned with whether or not members of the library profession understand LLAMA's mission and the sheer amount of resources available through membership in the organization; and if newer generations of library professionals interested in leadership and management have needs that are not currently being addressed by the organization. These are some of the larger questions that LLAMA hopes to answer in the work of three consecutive Emerging Leader classes. Through the leadership of Janine Golden and Kerry Ward, the multi-year LLAMA Emerging Leaders project will culminate in new strategies for LIS student recruitment and greater collaboration with LIS schools - a main goal of Dr. Golden's presidency.

Project N: Scope and Approach

Our expected outcomes for this project were: 1) to compile data and costruct a database on current LIS graduate courses in management and leadership; 2) to create and manage a survey of course instructors/contacts; and 3) to showcase results at poster session at the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA on June 24, 2011. In order to achieve these outcomes, our group of Emerging Leaders began by creating a survey that would gather information on current LIS/MLIS graduate courses based in library management and leadership in ALA accredited colleges and universities throughout the United States. We selected our groups of professors to survey based on location and frequency of courses. We compiled the data nationally, using the ALA-accredited institution map as a guide. We contacted each college to verify institution information, and to receive a proper contact who taught library management and/or leadership courses in the LIS program and who would serve as our contact for leadership and management courses. The survey was sent to the designated contact for leadership and management courses at the respective library schools, the survey was to be completed anonymously by an assigned deadline. We did however; ask for instructors to list their names if they were willing to assist us with years two and three of the project.

Survey and Results

Of the total number of surveys sent (157), we received a response rate of 29% (47). In the beginning of the survey we asked general questions, such as student statistics, program specific questions, and courses taught. The majority of respondents (47.8%, 22) taught 25 to 75

students during the course of one academic year, followed by 21.7% (10) of respondents teaching less than 25 students. These classes were primarily taught face to face (41.3% 19)) or online 23.9% (11). Not far behind online courses though were hybrid classes, a combination of online and face to face components with 21.7%(10) of respondents teaching these types of classes.

The names of management-type courses in the Library & Information Science programs surveyed varied greatly and ranged from Management of Information Agencies to Administration of School Library Media Centers. The majority of classes were taught within their respective LIS or IS departments with two respondents teaching LIS students management courses in the Education Department of their respective schools.

The primary areas of focus in these management classes were: supervision, personnel and labor management; project management, budgeting, and planning; and Internal/external communications. The area of focus with the least response in the survey was "Continuing Education and Development".

In terms of the importance of professional organizations to librarianship, an overwhelmingly majority 97.7% (42) agreed that professional organizations were, in fact, important. The types of professional organizations professors discuss with their students are national organizations such as the American Library Association and state organizations such as the California Library Association. Most professors also discuss specific subject organizations like the Special Libraries Association with their students. Interestingly enough, while most professors see the importance of professional organizations and discuss them in their classrooms, these affirmations come with caveats. One of the most interesting responses to these survey questions regarding the importance of professional organizations was:

> "This is a QUALIFIED yes. I think they are useful in sharing professional information, setting standards and guidelines, etc. I have been disappointed in amount of time, effort, and money that some of them (ALA mostly) spend on political and social issues that are not directly related to our profession."

This kind of response led us to suspect that these types of feelings towards professional organizations might be an issue so we asked professors, "What information or materials could LLAMA provide you with which would aid in the discussion of LLAMA in your course(s)?" Write-in responses included:

- Provide case studies, factual surveys, textbook reviews and other curricular support on the different aspects of management
- Offer career assistance for entry-level newly graduated students
- Have easier membership forms for students
- Provide management related continuing education resources
- Develop a set of management and leadership competencies
- Membership brochures sent directly to core LIS and other departmental faculty who teach library management
- Set up a task force of LIS faculty and students to identify their needs

Overall, it appeared that many of the LIS leadership and management professors surveyed (47, 29%) were unaware of the benefits of LLAMA membership for themselves or for their students. Many (59.1%, 26) of the professors were also unsure if their school or department advertised LLAMA membership student discounts as indicated in Figure 2. In addition, illustrated by Figure 3 is that just over half (22) of the professors that responded to this question mentioned the existence of LLAMA in their courses.
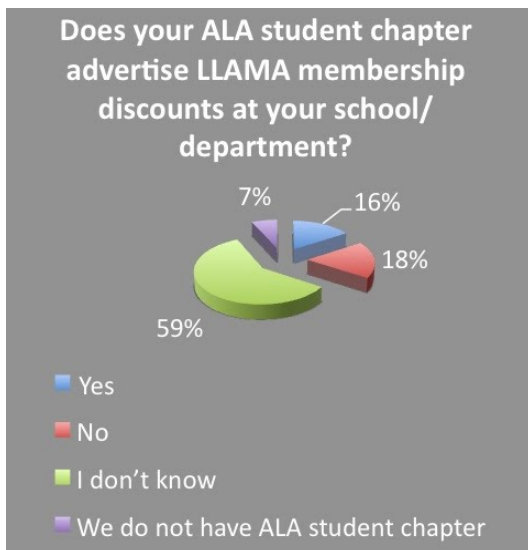

Figure 2: Leadership and management professors who were unsure if their school or department advertised LLAMA membership student discounts.
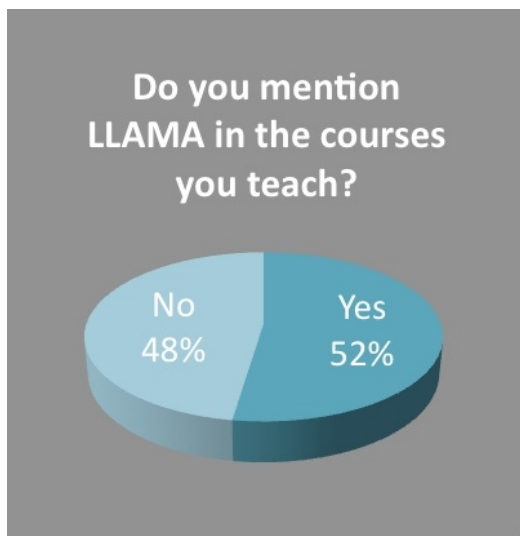

Figure 3: Just over half (22) of the professors who responded to this question mentioned the existence of LLAMA in their courses.

One final set of questions that we did ask the professors was about their own membership in LLAMA. Of the 44 responses, 13 (29.5%) answered that they are current LLAMA members with 31(70.5%) not being a LLAMA member. Professors were asked if they were once a LLAMA member but are no longer and what caused them to no longer rejoin. A sampling of their answers follows:

- I've had my committee appointments in other divisions and round tables. I might have remained a member for the print publication. Even with an ALA membership, I still pay over $200 each year in dues.
- Too many other divisions I need to belong to
- Cost
- To be honest I should also admit that LLAMA presentations and publications greatly varied in quality back in the day when I was an academic library administrator
- Heavily academic libraries in focus of content, workshops, etc. Not enough focus on other types of libraries (special, public and school).
- Less relevant

We believe that the data collected in our survey are indicative of the feeling amongst LIS professors that is that LLAMA's participation in the growth of leaders from the student level is not as obvious as it should be. The responses on how to improve LLAMA's awareness within LIS schools and departments will be important in tackling the next two phases.

Looking Ahead: LLAMA ALA-Emerging Leaders 2012 and 2013

Along with the completion of the survey analysis and evaluation study conducted by the 2011 cohort of ALA Emerging Leaders is the conclusion of the initial phase of the LLAMA project to determine the best ways that LLAMA can collaborate with LIS schools in nurturing and promoting leadership and management concepts and skills among LIS students. The 2011 group focused on surveying faculty and management course instructors in ALA accredited programs within the United States. The survey focused primarily on the leadership and management topics and skills most significant to instructors and instructor awareness of how well these aligned with LLAMA's offerings.

The baseline provided by the 2011 cohort can be built upon by the subsequent groups of Emerging Leaders. The 2012 group *(Project L)* is currently working on the second phase of the project, which includes working with LIS faculty, many of who had expressed interest and willingness during the initial phase. Together, they will create and administer a survey to ALA member students enrolled in management and leadership courses. Their aim is to determine the level of student awareness of LLAMA offerings, as well as their knowledge of the types of services and products they anticipate will be the most useful to them as new professional librarians.

The third phase of the project, yet to be submitted by LLAMA and approved by the ALA Emerging Leaders selection committee, is slated for the 2013 cohort. Should it be approved as a project, the 2013 LLAMA ALA-Emerging Leaders team will work with other ALA units, such as

the New Members Round Table and the various ALA Student Chapters, to examine the data gathered by the 2011 and 2012 teams and draft strategic plans to recruit new professional librarians into LLAMA membership.

Conclusion

Our year of participating as the 2011 ALA LLAMA Emerging Leaders on this *Project N* has concluded, however our efforts on this project have not. Since we have agreed to be available to assist the 2012 EL in part 2 of this project, we participated in a telephone conference in February of 2012 that included all combined members of both the 2011 and 2012 LLAMA EL cohorts. We talked about the past and what we learned, the present and how we can assist the 2012 ELs, and also the future direction of LLAMA's Collaboration with Graduate LIS Schools. The vision is that if the year 3 proposal of this project is accepted that there would be the lessons learned, the working wisdom, and the experience of all three cohorts, namely fifteen Emerging Leaders.

Melissa Brisbin (brisbinmelissa@gmail.com) is Senior Librarian for the Cape May County Library System; **Melissa Cardenas-Dow** (melissa.cardenasdow@gmail.com) is Outreach/Reference Librarian at University of Redlands; **Janine Golden** (JGolden@mail.twu.edu) is Assistant Professor at Texas Woman's University; **Deana Greenfield** (deanagreenfield@gmail.com) is Assistant Professor at National Louis University Library; **Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada** (lessalozada@gmail.com) is Part-Time Young Readers Librarian at Palos Verdes Library District and Part-Time Teen Librarian at Redondo Beach Public Library; and **Tinamarie Vella** (tinamarie.vella@gmail.com) is City University of New York Graduate School of Journalism Research Center.