

Leading the Library by Leading the Campus: A Dean's Perspective

Barbara I. Dewey

Introduction

Library deans and directors are, of course, responsible for operations of the university or college library. The news release about an appointment to the position of Dean, University Libraries summarizes these operational duties and frames the areas of responsibility from an organizational perspective.

As the leader of Penn State's information resources enterprise, the dean will serve as the official representative and advocate for the University Libraries and Penn State Press and oversee approximately 1,150 full- and part-time faculty and staff. The University Libraries comprise 14 libraries at the University Park campus and libraries at 22 other campuses, Media Technology Support Services and the University Records Management Program. Collections include more than 5.2 million volumes, 69,000 serial titles, 517 databases and more than 50,000 e-books, as well as extensive holdings of maps, microforms, government publications, archives and audio-visual materials. The University Libraries and the Penn State Press jointly operate the Office of Digital Scholarly Publishing and collaborate on the development of new modes of disseminating research and scholarship.¹

Further elaboration of a dean's responsibility is found in two recent job advertisements. York University notes that "guided by the Libraries' strategic plan, *New Horizons for the Digital Age 2012-2015*, the University Librarian will provide strategic direction to the Libraries' portfolio, and oversee the administration, budget, planning, and policy development for seven libraries, in four buildings, on two campuses."² Texas Tech University adds that the Dean of Libraries "will position the libraries to meet and anticipate the needs of faculty, staff, students, and the broader community, now and in the future."³ These statements go beyond responsibility for specific library departments and functions to elaborate on general areas of responsibility for the entire library. In the case of Texas Tech a user-centered focus is underscored.

What is Missing?

The fact that library deans "lead" the library is obvious. However, the more critical part of the job is institutional leadership. Success in leading the institution in a number of areas is crucial to success of the library in achieving its mission of supporting students and faculty. Library deans and librarians, for that matter, are ideal leaders for colleges and universities. Why? They support all sectors of the campus – all disciplines, all colleges, all administrators, all staff, and all students. The broad perspectives of librarians provide a perfect basis for visible and effective institutional leadership. The profession of academic librarianship values service over self, academic freedom, diversity in all regards, and nonjudgmental support of the knowledge universe. These values provide for a barrier-free path to institutional leadership. They are not, or

should not be, burdened by collective ego or delusions of grandeur. In fact, as a profession librarians have an unbridled enthusiasm for education and discovery within a strong service oriented context.

Fagan's literature review of academic library dean effectiveness revealed few studies relating effectiveness to institutional needs, metrics, or markers of success. Most studies are internally focused on library leaders' success as it relates to areas internal to the library and its staff.⁴ A notable exception is the groundbreaking work of Lynch, et.al. studying the attitudes of presidents and provosts regarding the university library. Among many other findings this study emphasizes the need for library leadership to align the library's activities with areas of strategic importance to the university and articulate this alignment clearly and effectively. In addition, the authors concluded a strong need for library deans to fully understand university governance practices and how to participate effectively especially at the chief academic officer or provost level.⁵ These studies provide a strong roadmap and opportunity for leadership at the institutional level. As noted by Kranich, et.al. "we have unleashed our unique power to bring people together, build community and reposition the library as a more relevant and significant partner on campus, demonstrating how academic libraries can turn outward and fulfill their promise to transform campus communities."⁶

Getting to the Table(s)

Meaningful and effective leadership at the institutional level requires active participation on key committees, working groups, councils, and other venues where important decision making is occurring. It is important to study both the formal and the informal governance landscape to identify appropriate venues for participation. Governance research requires an in depth study of the institution's website, discussions with other administrators and faculty, review of committee minutes, analysis of accreditation self-studies, annual reports, and planning documents. Proposing to join a group can be done in several ways. In some cases simply talking with the group's convener about the rationale for joining will be sufficient. In other cases a written proposal may be needed. Another approach is to try to obtain library representation on the group in question at least in an ex officio capacity.

Shortly after arriving at Penn State the dean learned about the Administrative Council on Undergraduate Education (ACUE) which is the principal administrative advisory agency to the President, Executive Vice President and Provost, the Dean for Undergraduate Education, and the academic deans on administrative matters that impact undergraduate education across the university. ACUE is responsible for the design of academic and administrative policies and formulates implementation for offering, delivery, and assessment of academic programs and learning opportunities.⁷ ACUE participation seemed fundamental to the library's mission and library participation essential to ACUE's success but a few years ago the library and selected other units were taken off the Council (associate deans from all of the colleges were still members). The Vice President for Undergraduate Education was approached about library representation reinstatement and why it was important. He offered to provide the agendas for each meeting and if a relevant agenda item appeared a library administrator could attend that meeting. It turns out that almost every agenda item was relevant and library administrators

always attended every meeting convincing the Vice President to include the library as a bona fide member.

The Graduate Council, likewise, establishes general policies and procedures pertaining to graduate programs and graduate research within the University. The Libraries had no standing member serving on the Graduate Council even though fundamental research support for graduate students has always been part of the core mission. More recently hosting of and providing access to electronic theses and dissertations resided in the library. The library is now providing data management consultation and the Penn State-wide repository, ScholarSphere, for deposit of scholarship and data in an open access environment. These close connections are in addition to the fundamental role research libraries play in collecting and providing access to scholarship in the form of physical and digital collections. When asked the Graduate School did not wish to add a library “seat” on the Council proper but agreed to a library “seat” on the Graduate Council Committee on Programs and Courses. The Committee handles review of new programs submitted for consideration. The acting head of the Arts and Humanities Library took the Committee seat and provides the conduit for supporting emerging needs of the graduate curriculum. Perhaps, in the future the library will be represented on the Council because of this toe in the door.

Strategic Institutional Leadership

A quick look at several university strategic plans or directions reveals areas of importance in the second decade of the 21st century. Some examples include University of Maryland’s values and principles to build an inclusive community, embrace the power of technology, act with entrepreneurial spirit, and take responsibility for the future.⁸ University of Iowa’s core values include excellence, learning, community, diversity, integrity, respect, and responsibility.⁹ University of Minnesota’s academic focus areas include strengthening the foundation of graduate and professional education, encouraging interdisciplinary teaching and research, positioning eLearning activities to support teaching and learning, attracting outstanding students and enhancing the undergraduate experience, advancing an international strategy, and capitalizing on the discipline features of the University.¹⁰ Michigan State describes their plan in one simple, but powerful sentence. “BOLDER BY DESIGN is the shared strategic framework that aligns our efforts across Michigan State University and around the globe, harnessing the power of working together to achieve our highest aspirations and to fuel the creation of better outcomes and growing value for our students, state, nation, and the world.”¹¹

Beginning in 2013 Penn State began the process of developing a new strategic plan. In past planning efforts the colleges, libraries, and other units developed their plans first. The university plan was developed last and informed by the individual unit plans. A new provost arrived and decided to develop key themes and principles to help the units’ planning efforts and harmonized the process. His efforts were strengthened by the arrival of a new President who articulated key themes, consistent with the provost’s including excellence, student engagement, diversity and demographics, student career success and economic development, accessibility, and technology.¹²

In many ways the library provided the university with a robust test-bed for its planning process because of the ability to successfully apply early concepts and foundational elements of university strategies in major library initiatives such as space planning and organizational development. The library plan is evolving and incorporates the provost's key themes of promoting our health, stewarding our resources, transforming education, building our digital future, and valuing and exploring our cultures.¹³ The library strategic planning process benefitted from the provost's initial thoughts. The library's three programmatic areas moving forward are discovery, access, and preservation; teaching and learning; and advancing university research. Foundational values form the bedrock for the programmatic areas mirroring the university's framework. They include equity of access, diversity and inclusion, ethics and integrity, sustainability, and empathy.¹⁴ The library's process was communicated consistently with central administrators, especially the Provost, confirming the utility of his emerging approach as productive and workable.

Master Space Planning: The Library as a Model

A space planning initiative between the library and the Penn State's Office of the Physical Plant (OPP) Division of Campus Planning+Design became a powerful way to advance innovative and strategic thinking into the University's larger scale master space planning processes. The library master space plan was an opportunity to strategically create the 21st century library reflecting changes in higher education delivery, research, teaching, and scholarly communications. The effort represented a major thrust towards partnerships to provide the suite of services needed by a student-centered inquiry driven learning environment. The major goal was to establish a strategic vision for the library's physical space in order to serve as a framework for thoughtful long-term decision-making, guide improvements to existing facilities and potential growth, depict a logical organization, with optimal adjacencies and opportunities for potential future projects, synchronize pedagogical objectives with facility development, and identify optimal locations for programmatic elements. Goals are advanced with each investment and design decision with a long view in mind.

Overarching priorities were outlined and referred to throughout the planning process. They included focused awareness of service models consistent with teaching, research, and service trends in the 21st century library; creation of flexible spaces designed to accommodate collaborative, quiet, and consultative teaching and learning, development of technology rich spaces that encourage creativity, learning, teaching and research for undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty; creation of flexible display and exhibit spaces, to showcase activities/collections/people in order to complement teaching, learning, and research; foster an environment where spaces and technology encourage interdisciplinary research; incorporate emerging services and technologies; provide for integration of new areas of research and collections not currently foreseen; and improve the delivery and housing of collections to enhance the maintenance and space for collections-related services and staff.

The library's master space plan was presented to the university administration and embraced as a model for future master space plan work because of its strategic and forward thinking

approaches utilizing principles and priorities as building blocks.¹⁵ Its framework will be applied in future college and campus master space plans.

Organizational Transitions Based on Newly Emerging Institutional Strategies

Strategic work at the campus and library levels can also be incorporated into planning for administrative transition and accompanying organizational development. The departure of two associate deans, retirement for one and accepting a new appointment for the other, provided an unprecedented strategic opportunity to revamp all vacant and existing associate dean portfolios based on extensive consultation with library staff and university stakeholders. Consultation meetings were scheduled with 27 groups and/or individuals and a questionnaire, developed and administered by the University Institutional Planning and Assessment group, was completed by 220 librarians and staff. Hundreds of ideas were presented by librarians, staff, and others. Following on university and library strategic planning a set of principles was developed on content of associate deans' portfolios and organizational changes:

- All associate deans work as a team and have collective responsibility
- Organization is more horizontal than vertical in all ways
- Organization and library faculty/staff embrace collaboration
- Department heads/campus library heads work closely together across the organization
- All faculty/staff contribute broadly
- Risk taking and experimentation is pervasive
- Organization always looks to the future
- Partnerships are fundamental and, therefore, increasing (Penn State and beyond)

The associate dean portfolios, (Associate Dean for Research, Collections and Scholarly Communications, Associate Dean for Technology, Discovery and Digital Services, Associate Dean for Learning, Undergraduate Services and Commonwealth Campuses, and Associate Dean for Technical Services, Diversity and Global Initiatives), were also grounded in the following rationale:

- Supports the dean and her multiple roles
- Maximum support for all is provided
- Capitalize on existing strengths
- Expertise needs addressed
- Advances strategic directions of the University
- Advances the 21st century research library for Penn State and for the profession
- Features cross organizational expert working groups and teams

The Provost and the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs were consulted on the process, the portfolios, and how the positions would be structured and compensated. They appreciated the strategic approach and visible integration of emerging institutional priorities into the associate dean portfolios and other organizational changes.

The Embedded Library Dean

Ten years ago the author wrote a chapter about strategic campus collaborations coining the term “embedded librarian.”¹⁶ noting then that embedding requires more direct and purposeful interaction than acting in parallel. The notion of overt purposefulness is a very appropriate and necessary strategy for embedding library deans, directors, and librarians into the central psyche of university administration and into various aspects of its teaching and research mission. A dean’s quest for embeddedness begins with the identification of key administrators, colleagues, and others who are in positions of power and authority. Overt purposefulness comes into play when individual meetings with administrators are scheduled proactively without waiting for an invitation. Asking to meet in their offices or on their turf is another smart approach to the surprise of these administrators. More than once dean colleagues asserted that it was the first time a library dean or director had ever scheduled a visit with them and actually came to their office. These visits provide a basis for long-term, productive relationships on a personal and professional level, background on campus leaders’ projects and priorities in their own words, the opportunity to bring this information back to the library, test “buy in” to library strategic directions, and surface issues regarding the library from their perspective. Making these connections at the earliest possible opportunity also is a good way to establish credibility with academic leaders and administrative colleagues.

There are two primary ways to embed – as a partner and as a leader. Both are equally important on today’s campuses. The information commons concept has, in many ways, paved the way and provided great experience for library leadership to engage in partnerships and invite prospective partners into the library. Commons facilities provide a central location for the array of services needed by students. However, in order to achieve a successful partnership the library dean needs to reach out to information technology administrators, entities that provide tutorial services (writing, math, etc.), consulting services, and other services that make sense in a central location offering access to many students. The process of bringing in partners sometimes reveals leadership opportunities for the dean to pursue. For example, a group of IT and library leaders, convened by the dean, began meeting on a regular basis during the planning of the Penn State Knowledge Commons and continued meeting after its completion to work on the many other technology-related issues of mutual interest.

Co-location of services for higher end research support is now emerging at many universities and provides additional partnership opportunities for deans to pursue. For example, the decision was made to offer space for the Census Bureau Research Data Center (RDC) in the Research Hub, Paterno Library, in partnership with College of Liberal Arts, College of Agricultural Sciences, College of Health and Human Development, Eberly College of Science, Population Research Institute, Social Science Research Institute, and Office of the Vice President for Research. One of 17 centers in the US, the RDC is the only center located in a library and made possible by library leaders reaching out to the research community.

Dean Leadership Can Be Pervasive – A One Year Case Study

Library deans are campus leaders and active participants in areas of importance to the university. They are sought after once college and university administrators are exposed to their

broad grasp of higher education issues, problem-solving abilities, and frankly the ability to get things done in a timely manner. A dean's campus activities for the 2013-14 academic year provide a case study of the breadth of participation and the accompanying leadership opportunities. That year the library dean was elected by dean and chancellor colleagues to chair the Academic Leadership Council (ALC) and the University Park Council of Deans. ALC provides advice and counsel on academic matters to the President and the executive vice president and provost of the University.

By virtue of holding this position the dean also served on the following important decision making groups:

- Facilities Resources Committee – Approves renovation and new construction plans and real estate purchases.
- Advisory Committee on Naming University Facilities – Advises and makes recommendations to the President of the University on appropriate names for specific buildings, parts of buildings, roads, and plazas at all University locations.
- Board of Trustees (nonvoting) – Represents the deans and chancellors on the governing body of the university

Participation on these groups provided insight into institutional decision-making and the ability to contribute at a very significant level to major projects and decisions.

During the year the dean also served on a variety of university committees including the following:

- World Campus Governance Committee – Advises central administration on how Penn State World Campus is governed.
- Digital Learning Steering Committee – Advises the Provost on advancing Penn State's digital learning strategy.
- Middle States Steering Committee – Oversees development of the institution's self-study in preparation for Middle States Accreditation site visit.
- University Health Sciences Council - Develops, recommends and promotes initiatives across the University to advance health sciences education, research, service and outreach.
- Human Resources Transformation Committee – Provides high level advice on the university's human resources transformation process and implementation.

This array of committees represents key activities of the university and participation on these groups provided deep insight into institutional decision-making. A place at these tables provides many leadership opportunities for a library dean and high level input for the university to help leverage its resources to the fullest. In addition, there are now expanded opportunities for library leaders at other levels of the organization to participate on university-wide projects, initiatives, and planning venues. The library is now clearly visible and integrated throughout the university.

Leadership in Shared Governance

Library formal and informal leaders can play a pivotal role related to an institution's success with shared governance. At some institutions library deans occasionally serve as a "dean" representative on the faculty senate. Librarians are well regarded senators and often tapped for significant roles. For example, the first woman president ever of the University of Tennessee Faculty Senate came from the library.¹⁷ Many faculty senate committees are populated with librarians and library administrators including in leadership positions. Most institutions have some type of library or library/information technology senate committee where the dean can provide direction and receive advice from faculty and students. It is often the case that the committee chair and members benefit from gentle, but firm, guidance from the library dean (and in some cases the CIO). Some committees with dean representation have the important work of reviewing petitions from faculty members and administrators who assert that he or she has suffered a substantial injustice resulting from a violation of: a) academic freedom; b) procedural fairness; or c) professional ethics. This work often revolves around the promotion and tenure process and provides an opportunity to improve the process implementation over time. It is also an excellent opportunity to meet faculty and administrators from around the university and gain in depth knowledge of faculty governance issues.

Adept practice of shared governance at the library level has institutional implications. Penn State's Library Faculty Organization (LFO) not only shapes policies and procedures but promotes the efforts of the library faculty toward the achievement of academic and scholarly excellence. LFO also advises the dean on matters related to the Libraries' ability to respond to University-wide academic, research, and educational matters and our effectiveness in meeting University needs.¹⁸ LFO's work has been emulated by academic units, particularly in the areas of mentoring and promotion of fixed term faculty (not on the tenure track). LFO officers and the dean work in partnership with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs to help the university advance faculty support, mentoring, and communication with the administration.

Diversity and Library Leadership

Library deans and academic librarians are well positioned to play leadership roles in advancing campus institutional diversity initiatives because of the inherent commitment to embracing people and the multitude of ideas reflecting the breadth and depth of the human experience. Libraries play a central role in the intellectual, social, and cultural life of students who are at a critical point in their development as productive citizens of the world. Recruitment of librarians and staff from a variety of backgrounds is fundamental to the library's success in developing the environment, the collections, the services, and the experiences reflecting the rich global diversity. A central part of leadership in diversity is embracing partnerships and collaborations within and beyond the campus. The emphasis on making connections is fundamental to the library's success as a campus leader in advancing diverse learning, intellectual, social, and cultural experiences. Initiatives such as library residency programs to recruit a diverse workforce, programming, contributing to the scholarship of diversity, and providing resources to

strengthen diversity in the library and more generally provide leadership models for the university to emulate.

Getting to the Next Level Through Flipped Leadership

In summary, sustaining campus leadership from a library dean's perspective comes from a willingness to engage in flipped leadership. Like the flipped classroom concept, flipped leadership provides the opportunity for librarians at all levels to engage in meaningful leadership roles throughout the campus. Leadership flipped to embrace a large number of librarians and staff will greatly increase the depth and breadth of library campus leadership. More leaders equals more library presence at more tables throughout the institution bringing the most appropriate and deepest expertise to the initiatives at hand. The dean can and should delegate appropriate leadership opportunities to ensure that library leadership permeates into every corner of the campus. The end result is a dynamic environment of partners, collaborators, and co-creators of knowledge and learning to advance the global society. In the future, the experiences gained from campus leadership by deans and librarians may be the basis for a growing number of high level campus administrators who originate from libraries. Library leadership at the institutional level will certainly increase administrators' awareness and support of the library mission in higher education.

Barbara I. Dewey (bdewey@psu.edu) is Dean of University Libraries and Scholarly Communications at Penn State University.

Published: November 2014

Endnotes

¹ Penn State News Release, March 18, 2010. Accessed July 17, 2014

<http://news.psu.edu/story/169283/2010/03/18/dewey-named-dean-university-libraries-and-scholarly-communications>

² York University. Job description for University Librarian. Accessed July 17, 2014.

<http://www.arl.org/leadership-recruitment/job-listings/record/a0ld000000FSok3EAD>

³ Texas Tech University. Job description for Dean of Libraries. Accessed July 17, 2014 .

<http://www.arl.org/leadership-recruitment/job-listings/record/a0ld000000EvBI4EAF>

⁴ Jody Condit Fagan. "The Effectiveness of Academic Library Deans and Directors," *Library Leadership & Management* 26 (1): 1-18.

⁵ Beverly P. Lynch, Catherine Murray-Rust, Susan E. Parker, Deborah Turner, Diane Parr Walker, Frances C. Wilkinson, and Julia Zimmerman. "Attitudes of Presidents and Provosts on the University Library," *College & Research Libraries* 68 (3) (2007): 213-227.

⁶ Nancy Kranich, Megan Lotts, and Gene Springs. "The Promise of Academic Libraries: Turning Outward to transform campus communities," *C & R L News* 75(4) (2014): 185.

⁷ Penn State Office of Undergraduate Education. Administrative Council on Undergraduate Education, accessed on July 27, 2014, <http://www.psu.edu/oue/acue.html>

⁸ University of Maryland. *Transforming Maryland – Higher Expectations*, accessed on July 18, 2014, http://www.umd.edu/strat_plan/exec_summary.cfm

⁹ University of Iowa. *Renewing the Iowa Promise: Great Opportunities – Bold Expectations*, accessed on July 18, 2014, <http://president.uiowa.edu/files/president.uiowa.edu/files/RenewingTheIowaPromise.pdf>

¹⁰ University of Minnesota. Office of the Provost and Academic Affairs, accessed on July 18, 2014, <http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/index.html>

¹¹ Michigan State University. Bolder By Design. Accessed on July 21, 2014, <http://bolderbydesign.msu.edu/>

¹² *Penn State News*. “Barron Introduces Six Major Topics to Spark Discussion Across University.” accessed July 21, 2014, <http://news.psu.edu/story/315948/2014/05/14/administration/barron-introduces-six-major-topics-spark-discussion-across>

¹³ Jones, Nicholas P. “Strategic Planning” presentation to the Penn State Academic Leadership Council, March 24, 2014.

¹⁴ Penn State University Libraries Strategic Plan – 2014-2018. accessed on July 21, 2014, <https://www.libraries.psu.edu/content/dam/psul/up/admin/documents/2014-2018-UL-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

¹⁵ Penn State University Office of the Physical Plan and University Libraries. *University Park Libraries Facilities Master Plan*.

¹⁶ Barbara I. Dewey. “The Embedded Librarian: Strategic Campus Collaborations,” in *Libraries Within Their Institutions: Creative Collaborations* ed. by William Miller and Rita M. Pellen (Binghamton, NY: Haworth Information Press, 2004): 5-17.

¹⁷ Pauline Bayne, (at the time, Professor and Head, George Devine Music Library) University of Tennessee, Knoxville Faculty Senate President, 1981-82.

¹⁸ Penn State University Libraries. Library Faculty Organization Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules. Revised June 2013, accessed on July 30, 2014, <https://www.libraries.psu.edu/content/dam/psul/up/groups/intranet/lfo/2013-11-26-LFOConstBylawsFINAL.pdf>