Educational Background of ARL Directors
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Abstract

Strong leadership is needed to provide vision and focus in academic libraries during this rapidly changing environment. While leadership skills can be acquired in many ways, this study examines formal education. Graduate degrees of Association of Research Library (ARL) directors were identified to determine whether they have earned library and information science degrees as well as other graduate degrees. Results indicate that 90% of the ARL directors have library degrees but the remaining 10% have graduate degrees in a variety of disciplines though not solely in management or leadership. Additionally, the percentage of ARL directors with doctorates has increased slightly in the past 20 years, while the percentage of those with MLIS degrees has decreased.

Introduction

Organizations thrive with good leadership, and academic libraries are no exception. Within the constantly changing environment of research support, student success, and knowledge creation, academic libraries need sound leadership as they re-invent themselves to serve their users.

Leadership can be defined as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse 2010, 3), as distinguished from management which "is directed toward coordinating activities in order to get a job done" (Northouse 2010, 11). Library directors, while being managers, also strive to be meaningful leaders in order to inspire growth to meet today's challenges. In reality, leadership may be more prevalent in the middle levels of the organization; from department chairs, coordinators, and supervisors and including those in non-supervisory roles. Leaders can appear in all areas of a library, however, for the purposes of this article, those administrators holding the highest senior level position within the library hierarchy, having titles such as library director, dean, or university librarian, will be called library directors.

With rapidly changing academic and research library environments, strong leadership skills are needed at the top level to provide a vision and set a direction for future initiatives of the library. This includes not only working on the inside through motivation, opportunity, and training, but convincing those on the outside that libraries are valued and needed in an overly Googlized world. Library directors continuously need to educate college and university officials regarding the importance of new library initiatives such as research data management and open access textbook initiatives. Strong communication and persuasive skills become vital as library directors attempt to expand their piece of the institution's financial pie.

Leadership traits, including team building and negotiation skills, can be acquired and enriched through many different avenues including work experience, training opportunities, and

formal education. While the growth of leadership skills is multi-dimensional, this paper solely focuses on the education angle. What are the educational backgrounds of our library directors? Do they have the master's degree in library science as well as advanced degrees in management or leadership? Are those interested in library administration seeking additional degrees as one way to enhance their knowledge in order to address the changes in academic libraries more effectively? This purpose of this paper is to identify the educational background, specifically the graduate degrees, attained by library directors.

The population for this study is composed of library directors whose institutions are affiliated with the Association for Research Libraries (ARL). This organization began in 1932 with 42 libraries, whose directors shared the common values of innovation and partnership (Association of Research Libraries, n.d.). Today, ARL has expanded to 125 libraries and, while most are academic libraries, there are a few public and government libraries as well as a state library and a research center.

Literature Review

Skills needed by library directors

What skills and attributes do academic librarian directors need to become effective leaders? Hernon, Powell, and Young (2002) examined job postings and interviewed twenty professionals inquiring about the ideal characteristics given the responsibilities of academic library directors. They categorized their results into 105 final attributes and placed these into the broad categories of managing, leading, planning, dealing with others, individual traits (general and leadership), and general areas of knowledge including public relations, scholarly communication, and digital libraries (Hernon et al. 2002). This comprehensive view of traits, skills, and knowledge illustrates the complex nature of effective leadership. Weiner (2003) also examined leader responsibilities and found that knowledge of budgets, strategic planning, and organizational culture are crucial as well as the director's effectiveness and readiness for challenges.

How do potential leaders attain these attributes? Formal education is one way as illustrated by those seeking a second master's or doctoral degree in management or leadership. Workshops and mentorships can also expose the potential administrator to opportunities and challenges, but even then, learning to be a successful leader is a continuous process. Having a multitude of work experiences is another way to expose future leaders to these responsibilities.

Previous leadership positions

Myers and Kaufman (1991) studied characteristics of ARL directors from 1970-1989 and noted within their job trajectories many had previously held associate director positions. This conclusion coincided with Harris-Keith (2016) who observed that directors having previous work experiences as associate directors were better prepared for their directorship positions than those who had not been associate directors. Even then, she concluded her comprehensive study by stating that "library directors are critically underprepared in important leadership skills, and are largely learning these skills on the job" (Harris-Keith 2016, 315).

Job announcements

There are 60 library programs accredited by the American Library Association. These programs graduate students who receive library and information science degrees with varied titles including: the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS), the Master of Library and information science (MLS), the Master of Science in Library and information science (MSLS), and the Master of Science in Library and Information Science (MSLIS). Additionally, many job postings state that candidates may possess this library degree or its equivalent. For the purposes of this paper, library master's degrees are referred to as MLIS degrees.

The MLIS degree has been a requirement listed in many academic library job postings though this requirement has not been consistent throughout the years. Lynch and Smith (2001) examined position announcements from 1973 to 1998 and found that all of the 1973 postings required the library master's degree but only 64% did in 1983. They noted that the requirement was then seen in 77% of the job postings in 1988 and 87% of the postings from 1998. However, they noted that larger libraries were less likely to require the MLIS. On a side note, 6% of the job postings required a second master's degree (Lynch and Smith 2001).

Upon examining library director postings, Maciel, Kaspar, and vanDuinkerken (2018) reported that 63% (28/44) of the director announcements required the MLIS degree while 13% (6/44) required an advanced degree "of some kind" (29). In the 10 remaining cases, no library science degree was mentioned at all within the advertisements. Regarding degree preference (as opposed to requirement), 27% (12/44) listed a desire for a doctoral degree while another 11% (5/44) of the postings indicated that a second degree (master's or doctorate) was preferred. The remaining 27 announcements did not list preferred degrees (Maciel et al. 2018). "It is not clear from the literature whether a second master's degree or doctorate is necessary for those who aspire to a director position" (Weiner 2003, 7).

A sizeable majority (87%) of academic library directors surveyed by Simpson (2013) required the MLIS degree for their new hires though many requiring the degree did so because of contractual obligations and internal library policies. Some questioned the value of MLIS, and one stated that "the skills and knowledge needed to run today's and tomorrow's libraries are increasing and increasingly complex, and may not all be provided by the traditional MLS" (Simpson 2013, 9).

Degrees held by library directors

Mackenzie and Smith (2011) examined degrees held by library directors from different types of libraries and found that most (88%) of the library deans and directors have earned the MLIS. The remaining respondents either had earned graduate degrees in different disciplines, or had attained a four-year or two-year degree. It should be noted that many different types of librarians were part of this survey including public, special, as well as academic librarians.

Upon examining credentials of library directors from 80 liberal arts colleges, McCracken (2000) discovered that all but one of the library directors had the MLIS degree. Additionally, the MLIS was the sole degree for 32 (40%) of the library directors, while 31 (39%) had a second

master's and 16 (20%) held a doctoral degree. Additionally, six of the 16 doctorate degrees were in library and information science. McCracken (2000) did not find a relationship between doctoral degree directors and libraries with larger volumes, budgets, or personnel.

Looking closely at ARL directors (Table 1), Myers and Kaufman (1991) examined demographic characteristics, including highest degrees, of ARL directors and found that in 1970, 44% directors had doctorates, while in 1989, 38% directors held doctorates. During this time period, doctorates were a preferred degree found in many job postings. Karr (1984) reported that half of the ARL directors had doctorates in 1966 compared to approximately a third in 1981. Recent studies have shown a downward trend in doctoral holders; Hernon, Powell, and Young (2001) reported that approximately 30% of the ARL directors in 1985 had earned doctorates but then it declined to about 25% in 1998. Wilder (2003) discovered that 20% of the ARL directors in 2000 had attained either library science or subject doctorates continuing the downward pattern.

Table 1:Literature Review: Doctoral Degrees held by ARL directors

Study	Year	Percent with Doctorate
Karr (1984)	1966	50%
Myers and Kaufman (1991)	1970	44%
Karr (1984)	1981	~33%
Hernon, Powell, and Young (2001)	1985	~30%
Myers and Kaufman (1991)	1989	38%
Hernon, Powell, and Young (2001)	1998	~25%
Wilder (2003)	2000	20%

Perception can be as important as the degree itself as Hernon, et al. (2001) discovered while interviewing 19 ARL directors regarding the characteristics of successful leaders. When asked about degree expectations, one director stated that "the larger the library, the less important the Ph.D. degree" (130) since management skills and leadership skills are more desirable characteristics when overseeing larger libraries. In a similar vein, another exclaimed, "faculty are more impressed with what the director does than with his/her degrees" (130). On the contrary, another director believed that a doctorate "helps to create more of a collegial feeling with deans and other faculty" (130).

Library education

Are library schools preparing their students to be productive leaders in this rapidly changing environment? Other degrees are more focused on leadership development, for example, one practicing director remarked that, "Eighty percent of the decisions I make are affected by my MBA perspective" (Hernon, et al. 2001, 130). No matter how much library

schools adjust, it is unlikely that they can equal the managerial content received by students in MBA programs (Mackenzie and Smith 2009).

Do library school students want to become administrators? However, DeLong (2009) questioned 170 new library professionals regarding their interest in being leaders and found positive results. Indeed, introducing library school students to management theory and practice can be helpful since it exposes them to communication competencies, time management skills, and problem solving strategies – all of which are needed by those in managerial as well as non-managerial positions.

Nonetheless, when Mackenzie and Smith (2011) surveyed 49 academic, public, and special library directors about their library school experience, they found that 55% of the directors believed that library school did not provide adequate exposure to management topics. Upon examining library education curricula and management coursework, Mackenzie and Smith (2009) found that 56% of the programs required students to take at least one management course; however, 44% did not require any. While many of these courses were not mandatory, 65% of the programs did offer management courses as electives. In their thorough study, Mackenzie and Smith (2009) examined topics listed in LIS management course syllabi and found that human resource management as well as strategic planning were frequent topics while analytical thinking and quality management were less popular topics.

More recently, library education appears to be responding to the calls for increased management training. Singh and Vorbach (2017) examined management LIS courses and reported that 81% of the programs require library and information science students to take a basic management course. They also identified a plethora of advanced management courses; however, none of these courses were required. Additionally, only ten of 58 LIS programs offered a project management course while 13 provided a leadership course (Singh and Vorbach 2017).

Continuing education for leadership development

The LIS profession is making advances in leadership education, but how are practicing librarians preparing to become effective library leaders, and how are current leaders enhancing their skills? Meier (2016) asked 44 university librarians and deans to identify ways in which they have prepared less experienced librarians to become directors, and responses ranged from fellowship programs and mentorships to delegation and site visits. Matteson, Musser, and Allen (2015) also found that continuing education has proven successful in enhancing leadership skills.

Indeed, the profession acknowledges a lack of directorship training by the publication of a recent three part series in C&RL News highlighting three new directors and their acclimation to their new positions (Powers, Garnar and Fife 2017a, 2017b, 2018). These three directors, from a variety of libraries, frankly discussed issues related to consensus building, culture change, and project management. This refreshing series of interviews is a welcome addition for those with an inclination toward leadership.

Moreover, there are numerous management training opportunities for the library professionals including workshops, programs, and extensions. For example, the ACRL/Harvard Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians, ALA Emerging Leaders Program, and ARL Leadership Fellows program are all stellar opportunities for advancement. Moreover, Skinner and Krabbenhoeft (2014) list over a hundred library leadership institutes, fellowships, and

workshops for the practicing professionals; however, they note that these workshops are widely diverse making comparisons difficult.

Methodology

The focus of this study is to identify graduate degrees attained by ARL directors. Data were compiled from the library's website or appointment announcements either through the parent organization or local news outlets. Nonetheless, on a few occasions, the background information was only found in print sources such as Who's Who, and, in one instance, the print source was rather dated. Compiled data included the name of the director, the title of the position, graduate degrees, and granting institutions. Additionally, the disciplines of the degrees were noted when available taking care to generalize degree disciplines to keep the data anonymized. The data were gathered for 125 ARL directors in January 2018 and entered into an Excel spreadsheet.

Limitations

Finding educational information on the directors was a bit time-consuming and problematic. First, the data are only as good as the information from the original source either in print or online. Secondly, job titles varied: the institution's website identified one title while a news story presented another. Third, at times it was difficult to identify the subject discipline of the graduate degrees earned. Fourth, since the data were gathered in January 2018, the information altogether is already outdated.

Another limitation of this study relates to the variety of institutions that are part of the Association of Research Libraries. Not all of the institutions are academic libraries; therefore, the requirements needed for each library director position differ. Also, the director titles such as dean, university librarian, or director, vary, but the job responsibilities of persons with these separate job titles were not evaluated nor taken into consideration.

Results

MLIS degree holders

Of the 125 ARL directors, 111 hold MLIS degrees, and of the remaining 14, one has a Ph.D. in Information Science, (Table 2). This results in 112 library directors with library and information science degrees (89.6%) and 13 directors without library and information science degrees.

Table 2: ARL Directors and Library Degrees

Degree	Number	Percentage
MLIS	111	89%
No MLIS but LIS Ph.D.	1	> 1.0%
No Library Degree	13	10%
Total	125	100%

Almost 40% of the 111 MLIS holding ARL Directors attained their library master's degrees from the following nine library schools:

- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (11),
- Indiana University (6),
- University of Chicago, University of Michigan, Simmons College, and University of California at Berkeley (5 each), and
- University of Arizona, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and University of British Columbia (4 each).

Interestingly enough, two of these schools, Chicago and UC Berkeley, are now closed.

Highest degrees

All ARL directors have earned graduate degrees; however, many have obtained multiple graduate degrees. The highest graduate degrees earned by the ARL directors have been categorized into the following areas: 1) directors having the MLIS degree and no other graduate degrees, 2) MLIS degree holders with a second master's as their highest degree, 3) non-MLIS degree holders with a master's as their highest degree, and 4) doctoral degree holders. Table 3 shows the breakdown of these degrees.

Table 3: Highest Degrees held by ARL Directors

ARL Director Degree	Number	Percent
Master's degree in library and information science (MLIS)	42	34%
MLIS and 2nd master's degree	42	34%
Master's degree, no MLIS	2	1%
Doctorate	39	31%
• *LIS doctorate and MLIS*	*10*	*8%*
• *Subject doctorate and MLIS*	*17*	*13%*
• *LIS doctorate, no MLIS*	*1*	*<1%*
• *Subject doctorate, no MLIS*	*11*	*9%*
Total	125	100%

Forty-two or 34% of the ARL directors have the MLIS as their sole graduate degree. An additional 34% have earned an MLIS degree as well as a second master's degree as their highest degree, while 31% have doctoral degrees, and two have non-LIS master's degrees. Forty-two library directors have the MLIS as well as a second master's degree. Table 4 shows that by discipline, the humanities are heavily represented with 25 degrees, followed by management or leadership (11), then the social sciences (5), and computer science education (1).

Table 4: ARL director's non-library Master's degrees

Broad Discipline	Number	Specific Discipline
Humanities	25	English (9) History (5) Music (4) Art History (2) Others (5)
Management or Leadership	11	MBA (6) Public Administration (2) Human Resources (1) Others (2)
Social Sciences	5	Psychology (1) Sociology (1) Others (3)
Computer Science Education	1	
Total	42	

Thirty-one percent of the ARL directors hold doctorate degrees, and within that group, 28% of those doctorates are in the field of library and information science. Seventeen directors have earned the MLIS as well as a subject doctorate, and those degrees are in the disciplines of administration or leadership (7), humanities (6), social sciences (2), and law (2) as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: ARL directors with the MLIS degree and non-library doctoral degrees

Broad Discipline	Number	Specific Discipline
Leadership	7	Educational Leadership (3) Higher Educational Administration (2) Human Science – Leadership (1) Managerial Leadership (1)
Humanities	6	English (2) History (2) Theater (1) German Literature (1)
Social Sciences	2	American Civilization (1) Politics (1)
Law	2	Juris Doctorate (2)
Total	17	

Eleven of the 13 non-MLIS library directors have doctorate degrees in a variety of disciplines including the social sciences (4), engineering (3), leadership (2), and the humanities (2). The two remaining directors hold master's degrees in the humanities (1) and the social sciences (1).

Position titles

A majority of the directors have the title of dean (44) or university librarian (29), however, a few are actually called director (7). Approximately 23% (29/125) have combination titles in that they have titles of provost/vice provost and director/dean/university librarian (24), and vice president/associate vice president and dean/university librarian (5). One assumes that directors in these positions oversee not only the library but also other areas of the university. The remaining seven position titles are, for the most part, affiliated with the non-university ARL members and include Librarian of Congress, CEO, and state librarian. At the time the data were gathered, there were nine interim directors and three acting directors.

Table 6 displays the division of position titles compared with graduate degree holders. For example, 89% of the ARL directors have earned the MLIS, but only 71% of those actually called *director* have attained the MLIS. Regarding the doctorate degree, 31% of the directors have earned a doctorate; however, 24% of those with the title *university librarian* have earned a doctorate.

Table 6: Position titles and highest degrees of ARL Directors

Position title	Number	MLIS	% MLIS	Doctorate	% Doc
Dean	44	41/44	93%	13/44	30%
Director	7	5/7	71%	3/7	43%
University Librarian	29	28/29	97%	7/29	24%
Dean/Director & Univ Libn	9	7/9	78%	2/9	22%
Provost & Librarian	24	23/24	96%	6/24	25%
Vice President & Librarian	5	3/5	60%	3/5	60%
other	7	4/7	57%	5/7	71%
Total	125	111	89%	39	31%

Discussion

ARL Directors – fewer MLIS degree holders

In 1998, Hernon, et al. (2001) reported that 96% (86/90) of the ARL directors had earned the LIS degree, and Wilder (2003) reported similar numbers as well. However, the current study indicates that 90% (112/125) of the ARL directors have LIS degrees. While the contrast is not striking, these figures do indicate that the rate of directors with LIS degrees has been declining. Additionally, the doctorate in library and information science among ARL directors also declined from 14% in 1985 to 7% in 2000, though this current study indicates that those numbers have remained steady at 8% (10/125). The majority of ARL directors have LIS degrees but the trend is moving downward.

A reason for this downward trend could be the combination of positions current ARL directors hold. Twenty-nine ARL directors have some form of *president* or *provost* in their titles, and this would indicate that they have additional responsibilities besides overseeing the library. In other words, university officials may be tapping librarians to be leaders of multiple units on campus, or, conversely, they may be calling upon non-librarians to oversee the library. Perhaps institutions are identifying gifted administrators from different disciplines within their organizations and utilizing inside talent to lead libraries. Table 6 indicates that 96% of library directors with provost titles also hold the MLIS degree perhaps signifying that these directors rose from the ranks of the library to attain their provost positions. However, 60% (albeit a small total population of five) of those holding the dual title of president and university librarian hold the MLIS degree meaning that 40% (or two librarians) do not.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to determine if the directors' library degrees were influential in them being promoted to presidential and provostial positions, nonetheless, it was more likely their experiences of being library directors that catapulted them to higher positions

as Harris-Keith (2016) surmised for library director positions. Nonetheless, does a graduate degree, in and of itself, bring substance to the leadership and administrative table?

Graduate degrees and leadership skills.

The MLIS provides librarians with exposure to the foundation of the librarian profession. MLIS graduates attain knowledge of current issues in the field and gain an understanding of the philosophy of the profession. Depending on the field of study, they may be exposed to new skills such as collection development, information organization, digitization, or preservation; and they may also focus on working within specific populations. Exposure to managerial and fundraising topics is usually minimal and optional; however, some experience may be gained through practicums and internships.

Those holding a subject or second masters have greater credibility to work as a subject bibliographer or liaison librarian. They have gained additional knowledge outside of the library field to be considered specialists in their chosen subject areas. Perhaps the subject master's degree was attained for tenure or promotion purposes (although this seems less likely now as opposed to 20-30 years ago). Or perhaps the subject master's degree was completed for the pure pleasure of learning a new discipline. In either case, it appears that the discipline of the subject master's degree is immaterial when search committees seek candidates applying for ARL directorship positions since directors in this study have earned subject master's in many different areas. Table 4 indicates that most of the 42 directors with subject master's as their highest degrees have earned humanities degrees while just 11 have earned degrees in leadership – a discipline that would more likely assist in providing the director with exposure to leadership related topics including personnel and teamwork.

On the other hand, a second masters in any field does bring with it a greater understanding of the research process as well as the enhancement of skills related to goal setting and project management, two highly valued characteristics for any type of leader. Are search committees recognizing these skills when they see that candidates have earned any subject master's? Do they recognize a subject master's as evidence that the candidates possess those skills that are difficult to assess on paper such as integrity and vision?

All of the characteristics associated with a subject master's degree holders can be compounded when describing Ph.D. graduates. The doctoral degree provides substantial evidence that the librarian is an expert within the chosen discipline. This degree brings to the administrative table thorough knowledge of the research process as well as perseverance and, hopefully, a cooperative mindset. Additionally, the Ph.D. director is on equal status with other faculty and administrators on campus. Moreover, those outside of the library are more likely to view the Ph.D. candidate more positively than the master's candidate for administrative positions.

Doctoral degree librarians have demonstrated the ability to set priorities and successfully navigate the complexities of working with a dissertation committee. Search committees are likely to recognize the intangible assets of cooperation, successful prioritization, and keen project management skills. Nonetheless, most search committees will look for prior work experience as evidence of leadership potential.

What does previous administrative work experience bring to the table?

As pointed out by Harris-Keith (2016), prior administrative work experience is the most likely avenue for candidates to attain skills that are especially difficult to develop elsewhere including knowledge of fundraising, facilities planning, and compliance issues. Candidates with administrative backgrounds also have been entrenched in personnel issues and recognize the need for teamwork and cooperation. Project management and delegation are everyday events. While some of these experiences can be exposed to those in non-supervisory roles, the majority of these experiences take place while one is a director, assistant director, department chair, or involved in middle management.

Conclusion

While the percentage is still high (90%), there is currently a lower proportion of ARL directors holding LIS degrees. Though the numbers do not reflect a substantial change in the past twenty years, will this trend continue? On the other hand, the percentage of ARL directors with doctorates (31%) has increased in the past twenty years though is still lower than the 50% reported in 1966. Though formal education is but a minor facet in the attribution of skills needed to be a sound leader, the study seeks to provide a glimpse into the educational backgrounds of ARL directors.

Future research is needed to clarify the complex nature of leadership development in academic and research libraries. Now more than ever sound leadership is required as libraries face multifaceted challenges in these changing times.

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