

## LLAMA President's Message

Anne Cooper Moore



The more I work with the past, present, and future presidents of ALCTS and LITA on planning for a possible new organization to be called Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, and Futures, the more excited I become. From the collaborations over the last two years between the Boards and Executive Directors, we have learned a tremendous amount from one another. Librarians are extremely strong collaborators and we, as well as our patrons and staff, benefit from keeping an open mind, sharing ideas, listening, and trying new initiatives. The transformative service orientation we apply in our libraries is at work in the planning for the new division. From everything I have seen, Core will be greater than the sum of its individual parts and the members will be the beneficiaries. We will continue the professional development, activities, and benefits that LLAMA members enjoy today, but our current programming will also advance from additional voices who will bring refreshing new ideas. The best practices of the three divisions will become stronger as different perspectives come to question and improve.

LLAMA members will benefit from having both an online conference ([The Exchange](#), May 4, 6, and 8, 2020) and an in-person conference (Core Forum, [Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel](#), November 19-21, 2020). We will be able to use ALCTS's e-forums, an email conversation through which a moderator poses a question and then participants provide email responses. The moderator summarizes the responses for the record at the end of the day. LLAMA's highly-successful webinars and other educational opportunities will expand. Our maintenance of and training in leadership competencies will continue to evolve and influence the characteristics valued in library leaders. Our outstanding leadership mentoring program will grow to include mentorship of aspiring leaders in additional areas within our libraries.

As ALA transitions to greater online activity throughout each year and morphs Midwinter to a different model, we will have more ways to communicate with current and aspiring leaders throughout our libraries. My belief is that Core will provide increasing opportunities for us to reflect on the details of what we do while we visualize and build a robust future for our profession. Core is really about us – those who work in libraries of all types – and how we can grow, develop, and find different opportunities as the years pass. I truly hope that each of us will

be able to find our places in a cohesive and intentional organization as we progress through the stages of our careers.

It will be the members of the three divisions who will decide if they want to create Core in a simple yes/no vote in April 2020. If Core is approved by the membership vote, it will still take time for it to be officially approved by ALA. For the last few months, the Steering Committee has been analyzing operations, activities, and financial reports prepared by working groups during an extensive review of the three divisions last year. The Steering Committee will share a draft set of recommendations that might be used as a starting point for the new division soon, perhaps by Midwinter 2020. The Steering Committee will provide a framework and analysis that explores overlapping, complementary, unique, and signature activities among ALCTS, LITA, and LLAMA. You might refer to the Steering Committee's work this year as the legwork or foundation to give members a starting point from which to visualize and create the new division. We might think of Core as the next iteration of the mechanism that provides professional development support for both today's and tomorrow's library leaders. Everyone will have input to shape what Core becomes.

In 2016, LLAMA members were surveyed on the top 10 leadership and management competencies out of 49 options. Communications skills garnered the highest vote total with 60% of 282 respondents selecting it. Communication encompasses nearly everything we do and is important for both leaders and employees to master. We emphasize frequent and accurate communication using a variety of mediums and channels in my library. For internal audiences, we use several mediums to convey important messages: oral, written, visual, and combinations of all three. For external audiences, we use print and electronic channels. Increasingly, we send messages using all possible means and multiple times. I always say I have to say it at least seven times using as many means as possible for a message to get through. We cannot expect a message to be absorbed by even a small percentage of the intended audience if it is delivered through a single medium. We might reach certain individuals reliably through social media (if we send through all common social media streams), others through email, and still others only by a print mailing. With static or declining budgets in many libraries, we have reduced print marketing budget lines, which may eliminate contact with certain individuals. Phone calls to landlines used to be the most popular way to raise funds, but now most people have only cell phones and do not answer them, except for callers in their contact list. So fundraising is frequently conducted through text messages.

Leaders have to be attuned to the variety of communication mediums and channels preferred by those they wish to reach. Supervisors and managers need to understand the communication styles and preferences of their employees and to adjust their own style to match that of a given employee to be successful in motivating and coaching the individual to succeed and to minimize conflict. There are many ways to categorize communication skills, but I favor expressive, systematic, direct, and sympathetic.<sup>1</sup> The conflicts we deal with as managers could be reduced by understanding these four different personal styles. For example, both directs and expressives focus on the big picture rather than the details and would tend to conflict with systematics who attend to the details; however, directs and expressives also conflict with one another as directs are extremely focused and don't like interruptions and expressives want to

get answers to their questions immediately and in the hallway. And systematics might have conflicts with sympathetics because systematics see sympathetics spending a great deal of time talking with patrons rather than getting specific problems solved. But it takes all four types to both run and use libraries. Managers must learn to balance the proclivities of all four styles to make the organization work effectively.

Coaching is a technique used by managers to help employees improve their performance. Consultants have developed a huge number of resources and tools to help leaders develop their coaching skills. It takes courage to sit down with an employee and go over a specific behavior that occurred in a specific situation and the impact it had on others in the room.<sup>2</sup> But if the supervisor observed the situation and describes it accurately, so the employee realizes the effect of his/her statements on co-workers, amazing transformations can and do occur. Your worst nightmare employee can turn into a team player and reach his/her/their career goals with targeted coaching.

**Anne Cooper Moore** ([Anne.Moore@uncc.edu](mailto:Anne.Moore@uncc.edu)) is Dean of the J. Murrey Atkins Library at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte

**Published:** December 2019

---

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Edmondson, Jada. "Let's Be Clear: How to Manage Communication Styles." T + D 63, no. 9 (September 1, 2009): 30–31. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/227023387/>.

<sup>2</sup> "Feedback: Who, When, and How to Ask." In *Experience-Driven Leader Development*, 203–206. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2014.