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The Advocacy Issue

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Upcoming Issue

Fall 2012

Libraries and Museums:
Preserving and Exposing
Oregon's Cultural History

Introduction

When I first threw my hat in the ring to guest edit this OLAQ issue, I already knew what I wanted the theme to be: advocacy. But then, I've always been one to get mouthy about issues I care about. I have a newspaper clipping of my friends and me when we were in high school, standing on the side of the road with homemade signs in front of a row of historic trees as we protested their proposed removal. It was a win-win situation; we felt cool and rebellious by protesting something, and the trees, thanks in part to our efforts, were saved.

Not everyone is as gung-ho about advocacy as I am. When I told a colleague about the advocacy theme, she scrunched up her face and said that advocacy left a bad taste in her mouth because it sometimes gets as rah-rah as, well, a bunch of teenagers holding signs on the side of a road. While there is a place for bold, in-your-face advocacy efforts, library advocacy is so much more than that. It can also be quiet and subtle. Library advocacy looks like so many different things: relationship building, collaborative brainstorming, phone calls, sound bites, discussions, letter-writing, lobbying, e-mails, research, resource sharing, innovating, presentations, union bargaining, blogging, taking chances, outreach, images, legislators reading children's books, and yes, sign holding.

The authors in this issue talk about all of these things and more. They discuss both long-term preemptive advocacy efforts and short-term advocacy called for by crisis situations. Penny Hummel inspires us to take action in her battle cry, *Library Advocacy in Hard Times*. Michele Burke and Laura Zeigen provide a detailed blueprint for advocating for information literacy across Oregon's K–20 curriculum. In *Libraries are Obsolete*, R. David Lankes relates his experience playing devil's advocate at Harvard and raises some very thought-provoking questions. Both Teresa Hazen and Pam North share the details of their wrenching experiences fighting for their jobs. Nan Heim, Abigail Elder, and George Bell let us in on their advocacy conversation between lobbyist, library director, and library supporter. Elaine Gass Hirsch describes every library advocate's/sign holder's dream job, her position as Library Advancement Coordinator. Finally, in *The Issues that Find You and Refine You,* Jane Scott and Anne-Marie Deitering talk about the ACRL-OR board's developing role in local library advocacy efforts.

This issue is just what I hoped it would be. If there's an enduring message in these eight articles, I hope it's that we are stronger in our advocacy efforts when we work together: by sharing resources, ideas, and experiences; by building alliances; by talking boldly both about what's working and what isn't; and by speaking out for each other. Ultimately, we hold the potential to build quite a loud collective voice. That might sound a little too rah-rah for some, but I'm not holding up signs on the side of the road. Yet.

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Want to discuss what you've read?
There's a blog for that!
http://theadvocacyissue.blogspot.com

Library Advocacy in Hard Times

by Penny Hummel
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In her recent memoir, *Up the Capitol Steps: A Woman's March to the Governorship,* Barbara Roberts describes grappling with how to lead the state in the early 1990s, as voter-approved property tax limitations began to create devastating effects on public services. Quoting from the book, *Leadership on the Line,* by Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky, she frames the issue as follows:

> People do not resist change per se. People resist loss. You place yourself on the line when you tell people what they need to hear rather than what they want to hear … the hope of leadership lies in the capacity to deliver upsetting news and raise difficult questions in a way that people can absorb, prodding them to accept the message rather than ignore it—or kill the messenger. (Roberts, 2011, p. 238).

Faced with a game-changing loss of state revenue, Roberts sought to be an advocate for tax reform, communicating to Oregonians what they *needed* to hear rather than what they wanted to hear. Although her goal of stabilizing public funding in Oregon sadly remains only a tantalizing dream, I believe that the governor's approach two decades ago has particular resonance for public library leaders today, in large part because we are facing many of the same issues she faced. Mistrust of government is at an all-time high. Costs are rising faster than revenues, and there are simply not enough dollars to go around. And, despite our best efforts to position public libraries as essential, we are often in direct financial competition with other services (such as public safety, health, and roads) that are perceived by many to have a stronger claim to being truly essential than do our beloved libraries.

In such a challenging environment, how do we successfully advocate for the best interests of our libraries, and for the people that our libraries serve? As Roberts' example suggests, hard times call for a focused effort to illuminate what is truly at stake. Faced with many competing demands for financial support, it is easy enough for elected officials, administrators, and other decision makers to assume that, somehow, the public library can manage with less: just buy fewer books, shut off the "OPEN" sign a little more frequently, reduce a program or two. What's the difference? We'll still have a building full of books, and isn't that what a public library is all about?

R. Buckminster Fuller once famously described God as "a verb, not a noun." The same can be said for a public library, which is commonly seen as a physical entity, rather than a force in the world. In reality, the public library's essence is less about the books and DVDs on the shelves or even its staff, than it is the actions, interactions and transformations that its existence makes possible, every day, for people from all walks of life. As library advocates, our job is to ensure that this continual flow of energy is well articulated by ourselves and by others. When supporting the library doesn't cost our audience anything, this work is easy; when it requires that the library be prioritized over competing interests, it is much more difficult to speak truth to power. In this situation the key questions for me as a library advocate are: Am I motivated by the best interests of my library and my community? Are my words and facts

accurate? Am I respectful of context and of those I am communicating with? If I can answer yes to these three questions, the real issue is whether coloring within the safe lines of the "nice librarian" stereotype is worth the price of remaining silent. Usually, it is not.

The bottom line is that in tough times, library advocacy takes genuine courage, not only because we may be criticized as overreaching, but also because we ultimately don't control the outcome. If the stars don't happen to align, a brilliantly executed advocacy effort can still result in failure. Conversely, success can emerge, like a startled phoenix, from the most inauspicious of circumstances. As I have attempted to understand my role as a library advocate, one of my best mentors has been the Library Association of Portland's early head librarian, Mary Frances Isom, who said the following to her colleagues at a 1919 library conference:

> Most librarians hampered by small funds, swamped with trifling details, burdened by petty economies, are too timid. We have not been accustomed to meet life in the large, we hesitate to stray from the neat footpath into the open field. Have we not learned to plunge a little, to take a chance or two, to bank on the future? Only he who dares wears the laurel, only he who spends acquires (Isom, 1919, p. 19).

Almost a century later, Isom's challenge to the profession still stands: *Have we not learned to take a chance—or two?* Ultimately, library advocacy is about engaging fully in the political process; and, as any politician (including Barbara Roberts) would confirm, losing at least some of the battles comes with the territory. However, when we choose to actively bring our passion for libraries into the political arena, we are ensuring that, at the very least, library users have a coherent and consistent voice. Over time, the power of that voice can have a positive impact in ways we can never totally anticipate.

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Oregon's Goal:
Healthy, Knowledgeable, Successful People. How?
A Strong Information Literacy Continuum

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At the core of librarianship is a belief that knowledge transforms lives. Librarians believe that people have a right to engage with information and to experience the transformative power of knowledge (OLA Book Discussion Group, April 2012). Altruism aside, people need information skills to be economically competitive. We know that people must be information literate, able to navigate and use information effectively, in order to meet the increasing demands of participating in a knowledge society. We are preparing Oregonians with the flexible, transferable skills they will need to create, succeed, and earn money in information-saturated careers that may not even exist yet. It takes time for an individual to build these Information Literacy (IL) skills, and it happens along a continuum over the course of education and the lifespan. Librarians from across the state, from diverse institutions and types of libraries, work together to maintain Oregon's IL continuum. The IL continuum is an instructional and resource infrastructure that supports Oregonians throughout the process of developing the individual IL skills they need to reach personal and educational goals, and a strong IL continuum is essential to Oregon's economic vitality. In this article, we examine the current landscape around professional advocacy and Oregon's K–20 IL continuum.

We must be proactive about communicating with key stakeholders.

Advocacy efforts need to get out in front of decisions, rather than being reactionary. A proactive approach takes forethought and dedicated communication work. We are working in a climate characterized by rapid change, where decisions are often made and announced without the turnaround time needed to gather input. At the point where a school district announces a decision to eliminate library positions, we are already fighting an uphill battle. Much better to continuously build relationships with powerful statewide partners who understand and support the need for IL instruction and the role of librarians within that continuum.

It isn't enough to talk about our own work. We need to promote each other's work and promote understanding of an IL continuum.

Sometimes when people have or hear about a positive library experience, they attribute it to the remarkable qualities of one particular individual, rather than the product of a healthy IL system. Terri Keuchle, who has been praised for her work in developing the Highland Park Middle School 8-step research model, is quick to point out this problem; Keuchle has heard many times, "But Terri, that's just you," a remark that underplays expertise within the library profession and too readily chalks up a positive outcome to one gifted educator, without an accompanying understanding of IL as a discipline or continuum. As Keuchle explained at the 2012 Oregon IL Summit, "The fact remains that with the elimination of Media Specialists in Beaverton School District, the Highland Park research model will slowly disappear over the next few years. And, it won't be because I am gone, it will be because there is no media specialist who has a passion for teaching this all-important curriculum."

What is the role of the K–12 librarian and why is this professional important?

Librarians and their associated IL efforts prepare students for the critical thinking, resource evaluation, and analysis required to earn a college degree. As ACRL-OR (Association of College and Research Libraries) stated in their May 2012 online petition to the Beaverton School District, "School librarians support the development of all of these crucial skills. Stu-

Advocacy make you squirm?
Try another name

If the idea of advocacy puts you off, try looking at it through one of these lenses …

- *Outreach*
- *Transparency*
- *Marketing*
- *Updates*
- *Visibility*
- *Communicating with Stakeholders*
- *Accountability*
- *Staying in touch with your community*

dents who have not had the opportunity to develop their research skills with a librarian have significant gaps to fill in college."

The Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB), chaired by the Governor, was established in 2011 to oversee "an effort to create a seamless, unified system for investing in and delivering public education from early childhood through high school and college so that all Oregonians are well prepared for careers in our economy." The OEIB's "40-40-20" calls for a seamless transition from pre-school through graduate school and part of their charge is, "Developing an education investment strategy to improve defined learning outcomes from early childhood through public schools, colleges and universities." (http://www.oregon.gov/Gov/OEIB/OregonEducationInvestmentBoard.shtml). School and higher education librarians have already been doing this! We have articulated IL learning outcomes that describe skills needed at key points throughout a learner's life span, and we have a strong professional community with a history of collaborating with each other, across institutions, and across disciplines. Librarians can and should contribute our knowledge to the OEIB discussions. We are natural partners.

Along with many other states, Oregon is in the process of implementing K–12 Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The goal of the CCSS is to prepare high school graduates to meet college and career expectations. In the English Language Arts area, increased rigor is achieved by requiring the use of a higher percentage of informational texts and by increasing the level of text complexity.

School librarians are uniquely trained to find, to make accessible, and to make use of informational texts of varying complexity. School librarians can save the school money by teaching instructors and students how to use the internet and statewide research databases to find and select appropriate informational sources, skills our students need that may also provide an alternative to purchasing textbooks to supplement the CCSS. Adoption of the CCSS indicates an appreciation for the vital role IL plays in student success, but we have not seen a corresponding appreciation for the role of the school librarian within research instruction. "The changes associated with the Common Core and Smarter Balanced are moving so quickly that educators find it difficult to be authentically involved," explains Dr. Nancy Knowles, Professor of English/Writing for Eastern Oregon University, Director of the Oregon Writing Project, and Chair of the Oregon Writing and English Advisory Committee. Stakeholders need to know that a solid literacy foundation begins in preschool and is grown throughout the lifespan. Losing K–12 librarians impacts our students' literacy foundations, including their potential to meet the Common Core standards and to be college and career ready.

Information Literacy (IL) skills are nurtured and honed over time, and research at any stage is a recursive learning process. "The fact remains that cementing this process takes dozens of opportunities to practice, not just one or two. Each time a student undertakes a research project they will hopefully add to their understanding and skill level," explains Keuchle. K–12 school librarians have a distinct and essential instructional role in the IL learning process and in preparing students for college. The K–12 librarian is a professional with the credentials and expertise needed to teach students how to navigate the multiple formats and streams of information they will be expected to access and use effectively. They teach students how to find information, create new knowledge, use information ethically, adapt to new learning situations, and foster a lifelong interest in discovery. The blanket elimination of school librarians leaves a gaping hole in Oregon's IL continuum and sets a

disturbing precedent for budget officials statewide. Eliminating all IL faculty members, the entire instruction group for the IL discipline, as if it is part of a standard cut, is alarming. What would happen if all sports instructors were cut? Or all math teachers? If a body like the OEIB recognizes and says it is not acceptable to eliminate an entire instructional group for a discipline as fundamental to career and college success as IL, it might give other districts pause before making the same drastic decision. Otherwise, librarians are in danger of sending revised versions of the same advocacy letter to other school districts at a point when it is already too late to be of benefit or effect a change.

What advocacy for information literacy is already happening in Oregon?

Various library and associated groups in Oregon are working to advocate for IL instruction across the educational spectrum and otherwise advocate for librarians. These include the Oregon Library Association (OLA), Oregon Association of School Libraries (OASL), the Oregon State Library, the People for Oregon Libraries Political Action Committee (POL-PAC), ACRL-OR, the Information Literacy Advisory Group of Oregon (ILAGO), and the Oregon Writing and English Advisory Committee (OWEAC).

Oregon Library Association (OLA) The majority of OLA advocacy work is done by the Library Development and Legislative Committee (OLA LDLC). Lobbyists working with the LDLC explain that advocacy efforts are more effective when a common voice and common language are used to communicate about an issue. The LDLC is working with IL groups to draft an IL position statement that will provide some common language and talking points for use in IL advocacy. OLA lobbyists also explain that patron stories are very effective in lobbying efforts, so the LDLC is encouraging libraries to gather these narratives. According to OLA President Abigail Elder, "As an organization, OLA is certainly interested in hearing what other types of advocacy work the association can do that would be helpful to academic librarians." Although OLA does not have a PR unit, there is a publications committee, and Elder sees potential for outreach such as press releases, social media, speakers' media, and speakers' bureaus.

The Oregon Association of School Libraries (OASL) works to make sure that Oregon students and educators are effective users of ideas and information, and one way they do this is by advocating for information literacy for all students. The OASL promotes visibility in education, government, and the community, and has maintained a broad-based understanding of the school librarian's role in supporting reading instruction. One way to further the visibility of the school librarian's role in preparing students for college and career success is to explain both the ways that early reading experiences connect to the development of all literacies and the ways that school librarians support this development throughout the K–12 curriculum. With the recent merger, OASL became a division of OLA, similar to the Public Library Division or Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). The closer relationship between OASL and OLA will make it easier to coordinate outreach and advocacy efforts between school and higher education libraries.

The OLA Library Instruction Round Table (LIRT) was formed to promote library/IL instruction as a means to empower library users to become life-long learners. The LIRT enthusiastically embraced the recent OLA and OASL merger as an opportunity to promote cooperation and fellowship among Oregon librarians engaged in library instruction. A co-

sponsor of the annual Oregon IL Summit, the LIRT provides a forum for librarians along the IL continuum to exchange ideas and materials related to IL instruction.

The Oregon State Library is reaching out to establish relationships with the OEIB and to the Early Learning Council. The State Library, along with OLA, the Information Literacy Advisory Group of Oregon (ILAGO), and the Oregon Writing and English Advisory Committee (OWEAC), forwarded an Information Literacy Proclamation to the governor asking that Oregon officially recognize October as Information Literacy Month, just as President Obama has recognized it federally. The IL Proclamation was approved and will be used as a springboard for IL advocacy efforts in and around October this fall. In preparation for information Literacy Month, the OLA Library Development and Legislative Committee is asking libraries to gather patron stories of positive experiences that can be used in outreach efforts. Libraries might also invite a legislator or stakeholder to observe an academic, school, or public library activity or program. Watch the OLA Hotline and blog for updates on IL month.

The People for Oregon Libraries Political Action Committee (POLPAC) is a group of library supporters who work to support library issues and library legislation in Oregon. Oregon needs elected officials who understand the unique role libraries play in our community, and while the OLA cannot support political candidates, the People for Oregon's Libraries can. This political action committee funds library-supportive candidates as well as local library ballot measures.

The Association of College and Research Libraries—Oregon (ACRL-OR) is a division of OLA. ACRL-OR sent advocacy letters explaining the need for school library positions in the Beaverton School District, and explaining the need for an MLS librarian in an accredited college when Clatsop Community College was in danger of losing its only MLS librarian. ACRL-OR is also preparing to release an advocacy tool kit for libraries/librarians that find themselves in crisis situations and need advocacy resources (see ACRL-OR article in this issue of the *Quarterly* for more detail).

The Information Literacy Advisory Group of Oregon (ILAGO) is a group of librarians and other faculty concerned with IL instruction. The primary focus of ILAGO has been serving the 725,000+ students at Oregon's higher education institutions by making sure that two- and four-year schools share a common understanding of the skills necessary for students to be successful in research at the undergraduate and upper division levels. In partnership with the OLA LIRT, ILAGO is currently working to strengthen communication between higher education and K–12 school librarians. ILAGO is also in the early stages of a proactive outreach project to communicate with statewide stakeholders the importance of instruction along the IL continuum. Steps in the ILAGO outreach project:

- Compile talking points drawing on documents such as the OLA-LDC position statement, the IL Proclamation, and documents from partners like ACRL-OR and OWEAC
- Create presentations tailored for each target audience
- Present on the importance and benefits of IL and the IL continuum before various stakeholders, including all of the governing boards in the state within a year (e.g., the Oregon School Boards Association and COSA, the Council of Oregon School Administrators)

The Oregon Writing and English Advisory Committee (OWEAC) is a professional community of writing and English higher education faculty with over 20 years of experience partnering around articulating outcomes and improving instruction and learning for Oregon students. OWEAC is comprised of faculty at two- and four-year colleges and universities, is a strong partner with ILAGO, and has been a role model in terms of sharing work between institutions and disciplines.

What can you do? Many hands make light work!
Let's move Oregon towards a coordinated understanding of IL:
You can become active in and between these key organizations and work to develop and articulate partnerships with other IL professionals along the K–20 continuum. Here are a few ways to participate:

- Help draft and share common language and talking points (contact Michele Burke, michele.burke@chemeketa.edu and watch the OLA Hotline for updates)
- Share information about IL advocacy work across groups to establish the presence of a shared voice
- Work with the OLA LIRT to strengthen partnerships and IL articulation between school and higher education librarians (add LIRT to your OLA membership and participate in the IL Summit)
- Work on the ILAGO outreach project to touch base with Oregon stakeholders (contact Brian Greene, bgreene@cgcc.cc.or.us and watch the ILAGO listserv and blog for updates and a call for volunteers)
- Add OASL to your OLA membership and join the OASL listserv
- Collect data and evidence to support observations (e.g., how is student performance affected by school library models?)
- Start qualitative and mixed methods research to gather and tell stories backed by evidence. OLA lobbyists report that stories from supporters are effective in lobbying efforts and we need these for October IL month advocacy (contact Laura Zeigen, zeigenl@ohsu.edu)

Finally, encourage academic and school librarian involvement in OLA: OLA is not just for public libraries. Librarians of all types (public, school, special, and academic) need to work together to help Oregonians succeed in their education and information literacy development. Together we can be proactive on a larger scale, and we can help protect vital K–12 and other library positions. We can educate our community members about the roles librarians play in developing healthy, knowledgeable, and successful Oregonians. Don't wait for someone to contact you—make the first move!

Resources of interest
Ignoring the Evidence: Another Decade of Decline for School Libraries
http://tinyurl.com/c7w3px2

ACRL-OR—Association of College & Research Libraries
http://www.olaweb.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=61032
http://acrloregon.org/

Common Core State Standards - Oregon Department of Education
http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2860

Early Learning Council
http://www.oregon.gov/Gov/OEIB/OregonEducationInvestmentBoard.shtml#Early_Learning

ILAGO—Information Literacy Advisory Group of Oregon
http://ilago.wordpress.com/

OASL—Oregon Association of School Libraries
http://oasl.memberclicks.net/

OCCLA—Oregon Community College Library Association
http://occla.pbworks.com/w/page/8392595/FrontPage

OEIB—Oregon Education Investment Board
http://www.oregon.gov/Gov/OEIB/OregonEducationInvestmentBoard.shtml

OLA—Oregon Library Association
http://www.olaweb.org

OLA—Library Development and Legislative Committee
http://www.olaweb.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=63286

OLA—Library Instruction Round Table
http://www.olaweb.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=58311

Oregon State Library
http://oregon.gov/OSL

OWEAC—Oregon Writing & English Advisory Committee
http://oweac.wordpress.com/

POLPAC—People for Oregon Libraries Political Action Committee
http://pfolpac.weebly.com/

Libraries are Obsolete

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There are few of us who can know the exact moment their career ended. However when a professor of library science argues libraries are obsolete against a Harvard law school professor and the head of the lead funding agency in the field I think that moment has arrived. This was where I found myself April 18th when I took part in an Oxford-style debate as part of Harvard Library Strategic Conversations. The idea was to mix humor with serious debate on the proposition that "Libraries are Obsolete." I was asked to argue for the proposition: Libraries are obsolete.

This argument is useful to have, even for the most ardent supporters of libraries. After all, if we don't honestly debate the point, how can we truly be sure we are not headed towards obsolescence?

In looking at most of the cases against libraries many are focused on one type of library. For example, some argue against public libraries because they do not feel it is a wise use of tax dollars. Other arguments that fall apart in the face of evidence include the editorial from the *News Leader* (Florida's oldest weekly newspaper) where Mike Thompson opines:

> *While local taxpayers pick up the biggest tab for America's libraries, most librarians are little more than unionized pawns for the social-activist bosses of the American Library Association (ALA) … Today … ALA controls 62,000 members and, through its czarist accreditation program of many libraries, largely dictates what books are available for the most impressionable members of U.S. society, our children.* (Thompson, 2011)

This might be a valid argument if ALA did in fact accredit libraries, or if ALA had any supervisory power in libraries' workforces.

Other arguments have merit, but only from a given political view: libraries are a socialist attempt that interferes in the free market. Tax dollars would be better spent in other ways, namely giving it back to the taxpayers. If libraries are so valuable they should charge for their services and operate like businesses. These arguments are difficult to counter, because you often have to refute a basic tenant of ideology that is not likely to yield to evidence.

So frankly, in preparing for the debate I was both relieved that I couldn't find an argument worthy of Harvard, and dismayed that I was about to stand up before a crowd and have to half-heartedly make these weak arguments. Until I came upon an argument that scared the hell out of me. A very compelling argument that spans library types and ideology.

Libraries are obsolete because they act as institutions of remediation. Libraries were either created to fill some deficit in existing institutions, or over the years have adopted the role of remedying some deficit in the community. While this deficit model of libraries made sense at one point, today many of these deficiencies either no longer exist, or libraries now divert precious resources we should use to solve the underlying problem and/or institutions.

What scared me (and still does) is that the predominant message libraries use to justify their budgets and continued existence presents libraries as a sort of societal band-aid ministering only to what ails our communities. As with any argument about libraries in the abstract, the argument lacks nuance and parts are easy to refute, but I ask you to look to the core of the argument. This deficit model thinking has big implications for library advocacy, and even the evolution of the institution.

Community Deficiency: Access

So how do libraries present themselves as remediating institutions, and why is that a problem? Take the idea of libraries as sharing institutions. Many public and university libraries were created to pool and share information resources of a community (in the form of manuscripts, books, letters and so on). These libraries filled a need in the community to increase access to a commodity that was rare and expensive. The library, in this case, was a remediation for a larger problem of access.

Today one can argue that this function is obsolete for two reasons. The first is obvious to anyone who has ever been on the web. There are plenty of sites that let you share resources. From sites like LibraryThing and Goodreads for books; to Flickr (and Instagram, and Facebook) for photos; to YouTube for video; there are ample alternative, and arguably better ways to share ideas and resources. The second reason this deficiency argument no longer works is that libraries that began as sharing institutions have become lending organizations.

When Benjamin Franklin put together his subscription library in Philadelphia in the 1700s, more members joining increased access and the resources available. As more joined, they brought in more books, so there was more to go around. Today libraries don't share, they lend from a finite collection owned by the library. As more people join the library (use their services), they add demand, but not more resources. So when four people used the library, there were plenty of copies of Harry Potter to go around. Yet as hundreds of people use the library, demand increases, resources don't, so Harry Potter becomes scarcer. Access is actually decreased.

One clear way to see the difference between library as lending versus sharing comes from a story Eli Neiburger told me. Eli, Associate Director for IT and Production at the Ann Arbor District Library, had a member of the library ask, "If the catalog can keep track of books for lending at multiple locations (branches), can't it also include books at my house? I'd be glad to share them as well." This idea makes perfect sense in a sharing model; it makes no sense in a lending model.

A deficit approach to collections is to say the community doesn't have access to information, so we'll fix the community by making resources available. A sharing model says the community is full of information assets (books, letters, photos, ideas, expertise, stories, music); let's build a platform to allow community members to easily share with each other. Lending will lead a library to obsolescence as demand increases, information resources costs escalate, and the library collections look more and more like everywhere else instead of like the community itself.

Community Deficiency: Democracy

When Carnegie wrote that, "There is not such a cradle of democracy upon the earth as the Free Public Library" he was right. Public and academic libraries had minimal fiction collections and were one of the few places you could track the workings of government. The advent of the depository library program made up for a deficit in the public's access to the workings of the federal government.

However, today the government often bypasses the depository program and publishing this material directly to the public via the web. Before you say that we can't trust the government to be transparent, I ask you how housing microfiche of government-produced materials is equivalent to advocating for transparency? If anything it is a dodge of the true issues.

If indeed public libraries are meant to bring to the masses information that can be used to promote and further democracy, why then do our fiche cabinets full of government documents sit unused as the holds for romance novels and spy fiction grow longer?

Community Deficiency: Internet Access

The focus libraries have on remediation continues in the area of internet access. The argument is made that libraries of all sorts provide internet access to the disadvantaged and disconnected. To be sure, this is a real problem that needs a solution. Yet rather than divert funding to rural libraries to provide internet access, why not follow the model of rural electrification and take it to the home where it can be used? Imagine in the days of the Tennessee Valley Authority if they ran a power line to the library and told rural citizens that if they needed light at night or to listen to the radio they needed to go to the library.

The money we spend on libraries would be better spent buying the underprivileged a tablet and expanding eRate to include monthly allowances to buy quality information. Already states and universities are licensing databases for public use. Is there something so special about libraries that acquisition of resources can't be done by existing procurement procedures at these institutions?

Community Deficiency: Literacy

This argument hinges on the belief that our public and school libraries are necessary to promote reading. That might have made sense when universal public education wasn't so universal. When the color of skin and gender were barriers to accessing education. Libraries were the people's university. In essence, we need libraries to provide remedial reading education to fix our communities.

Today, while racial and gender discrimination are far from gone, the world has changed. Women now constitute the majority population of college students. In terms of race, rather than creating a separate system of education for minorities, affirmative action, minority scholarships, and other mechanisms are integrating minorities into the same high performing educational institutions as white males. Separate, but equal, was discarded long ago.

The answer to increasing literacy rates is to improve the performance and lower the barriers of access to education. The money and time spent on libraries would be better spent on our schools and teachers. Instead of using libraries as a "work around" for test-driven K–12 schools, we should focus our time and talents on getting a "No Child Left Behind" system that actually works. Instead of believing that librarians who have little formal training in reading instruction (and math instruction, and science instruction) can somehow solve the education gap through a do-it-yourself-here-are-the-books model, we should be focusing on enabling teachers to teach.

Community Deficiency: Information Seeking

What about the deficit in people's ability to find information? We need libraries to make sense of the glut of information now coming at our students and citizens. It is no wonder our reference statistics drop. Who needs a librarian to use a search engines that can traverse billions of pages in milliseconds when we can now do it for ourselves. Has Google become like a new DIALOG, where we must have patrons line up to our gatekeeping search abilities? Rather than use librarians as band-aids to bad search tools, let's fix the search tools.

Community Deficiency: Embedded Librarians

There was one thing that all the speakers agreed upon at the debate: even if libraries are obsolete, librarians aren't. Rather than dividing our time and effort on compensating for an inadequate educational system, or inequalities in the market place, we should free up our brilliant librarians to work within these organizations to make the institutions better. Why take amazing information professionals and saddle them with leaky roofs, security at the door, and maintaining physical artifacts in often duplicative collections just waiting to be digitized? We see this at the Cushing Academy, a boarding school in Massachusetts that made the press when they significantly downsized the physical collection of the library. They did so at the same time they hired more librarians. Close the library and hire more librarians.

Real Danger of the Deficit Model of Libraries

If libraries continue to be remedial organizations, focused solely on the problems and deficits of our communities, the communities themselves will find libraries obsolete. How long will our communities tolerate being told how they are broken? How long will we be welcome if all we do is highlight what doesn't work and add little value beyond filling in the gaps of other organizations?

Rebutting the Easy Reactions

Now, if you are anything like me you have been mustering your counter arguments as you have read this. For example, there is a big assumption in here that all information will be digital. And you would be right. But we must be careful of the rebuttals to this argument as well. Many approaches to rebutting these arguments feed right into the deficit model argument.

Fixing organizations is a great idea, but it's not realistic

So our big argument here would be that life sucks, get used to it (great replacement for the READ posters)? This is also very reminiscent of the arguments that not all information would be available digitally. Then Google started scanning books by the literal truck full. The perception of what is available in digital or physical form has shifted in those we serve. More than that, you are still saying the reason for the library is to care-take stuff not important enough to be digitized yet, or that we are a temporary organization until the technology catches up.

Supporting democracy is more than just government documents

Being informed in a democracy is more than simply keeping up with the information and documents that government produces. It involves reading newspapers, treatises, even keeping up with pop culture. This is true: have you seen the internet lately? Where once libraries filled the gap of providing a rich and diverse corpus to enrich our communities' thinking, the internet now represents a richer and more diverse corpus of thought.

Fostering a love of reading

Literacy is more than just reading, you say. Libraries foster a habit of reading and a love of reading. What exactly is it about four walls and stacks that does this better than, say, a living room? You can read anywhere, and with digital delivery to e-book readers you could argue that people are better able to follow their passions with instant delivery.

But use of libraries is increasing

This fact, if arguing a deficit model, only points out that there is need for remediation, not the form of the remediation. For example, in the unprecedented economic downturn over the past years, the number of soup kitchens and beds in shelters have probably also increased. I think we can all agree that instead of building more soup kitchens and shelters, we should fix the economy.

You callous careless bastard

First, remember that I am playing devil's advocate here (and give me another paragraph until I talk about how libraries aren't obsolete). Second, assuming that wasn't just an ad hominem attack, this is about the idea that a deficit model isn't a bad one, because there will always be a role for a safety net. The deficit argument isn't against the social safety net, but rather that we can fix the net through mechanisms other than libraries.

Illustration by Lizz Leizer

The Real Rebuttal

The real retort to the deficit argument that libraries are obsolete is not to find new and bigger problems, but to focus on (or at the VERY least include) aspirational arguments for libraries. Now before I dive into this, let me say that most of these approaches are already in full effect. My point is to highlight them and support them.

For example, let us take the deficits and show how libraries add value and have positive effects on communities (rather than mitigating the negative effects):

Internet Access
The library uses the internet to push the passions and possibilities of our communities to the whole world. Yes, folks can use the internet connection to check mail and apply for jobs, but they can also use it to create businesses and start global conversations.

Literacy and Reading
The library allows you to explore the great thoughts and imaginations of the world throughout time, and add to that pool. Come to the library, get inspired, and add your great ideas.

Democracy
Did you know your government came with an owner's manual? It's at the library. Help shape the direction of your town, your state, your country: the library can help you learn how.

Shifting From Sharing to Lending and Back Again

Like I said, these approaches are hardly unique to me. But there is one point of the deficit model that takes more than just sloganeering, the shift of libraries from places of sharing to lending organizations. To me, this is the real damning argument against libraries. If libraries continue to see themselves as focused on things that can be borrowed or consumed, and

continue to build collections *for* the community not *of* the community, there is real danger.

Libraries must become true platforms of the community. Want an example? I have been working with Polaris on a community portal to be added to their ILS. With it librarians can add information about community organizations (locations, services, events) directly to the catalog. So now you can search for materials on first aid, and the Red Cross will show up beside the results.

However, the system is built to allow community organizations to add and maintain their own information. Very small organizations or even individual community members (if the library chooses) can add their information and get a landing page on the net that they may not have had before. For organizations with their own websites already, they embed library and community information in their own websites easily. So now the Red Cross can embed books about first aid on their website.

This is taken one step further, because the same mechanism that allows this embedding can be used by other software and platforms. For example, a doctoral student at Syracuse University is building an iPad app to mount on local buses. At any stop, a passenger can find out what events and services are available community wide within a given distance.

This is library as community platform. The iPad app is not built or owned by the library. The information being presented is not owned by the library. Yet the library is indispensable in making this happen. The library is a platform that helps the community do something new, innovative, and helpful. The most powerful arguments for libraries, aside from the brilliance of librarians, position libraries as community platforms for improvement and advancement.

The people's university (when presented as a place of knowledge acquisition, not as a bandage to other educational institutions), the agora, the creation space, idea factory, all of these metaphors present a compelling and positive vision of the library that communities can take pride in. Now, rather than being associated with the library out of charity, or desperate straits, community members are part of an exciting and progressive organization. Rather than trying to fix the community, or bring everyone up to some sort of norm, libraries are foundations for individual advancement.

Let me be clear, I believe both in the necessity and importance of libraries and the social safety net. I know our communities face terrible problems, and our service mission is necessary. However, if you lift someone out of hell and don't tell them about heaven, how much hope have you given them? Libraries are not obsolete. They serve a vital and important mission in today's society, and in tomorrow's society. That mission that has driven libraries for the past 3,000 years is in service of a better tomorrow. That mission is hope through knowledge and the empowerment of the individual.

Libraries as band-aids may be obsolete, but that is not why we need libraries. We need libraries so we can fix our education system, so we can fix our economy, so we can fix our democracies, yes. But we need libraries even more to discover new knowledge not found in any textbook. We need libraries to create whole new opportunities for innovation. We need libraries to give our communities a voice and power in the working of government. Libraries will never be obsolete so long as our communities dream, and strive, and work to ensure a world of insurmountable opportunities. ❧

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A Tale of Three Layoffs

by Teresa Hazen
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I awoke to the unfamiliar sound of honking traffic in my downtown Philadelphia hotel room. Lying in bed, I contemplated the first conference day of ACRL 2011. My colleague and I had submitted a presentation proposal that hadn't been accepted. At the time I had been disappointed, but now I couldn't help but be pleased. No anxiety, just happy anticipation to learn new things and connect with other librarians.

After the keynote address, there was lunch and the inevitable raffle. "I never win anything," I thought to myself, as I walked up to collect an iPod. During my first session of the conference, I happened to be looking at my phone (who doesn't stare at a smart phone at least once during a session?) and saw that my boss back at Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC) had called and left a message. I had an ominous feeling after listening to the serious tone of the message asking me to call back as soon as possible. My colleague Anna, who was also attending the conference, got the same message.

We found a quiet corner in the cavernous convention center and called back. We were informed that all three full-time librarians (the two of us along with our other colleague Julia, who was out of the country at the time) were all being laid off effective June 30, 2011. I was tenured, had worked at MHCC for eleven years at that point, and had faculty status. In fact, all three full-time librarians had tenure and all had faculty status.

Burned in my memory forever is the sad picture of crying in the corner with Anna at a national conference. Needless to say, my conference was over before it really began. Drained of enthusiasm, I spent the rest of my time doing morose things like visiting the Mütter Museum and wandering around seedy parts of downtown Philadelphia, my mind constantly stumbling in disbelief at this turn of events in my life.

Mt. Hood Community College is a medium-sized community college serving the east side of the Portland metropolitan area. Founded in 1966, MHCC never seems to have enough money or adequate community support. It's a scrappy place to work with serious turf wars over a limited and ever-diminishing pot of resources. Until 2006, the school had employed only two full-time librarians, but the library was finally successful in adding a third position.

Librarians at MHCC are members of the Faculty Association union. The Faculty Association is part of the larger Oregon Education Association, which, in turn, is part of the National Education Association. We pay a boatload in union dues but in return have significant union muscle to back us up. At the time of our layoffs, the Faculty Association at MHCC had been engaged in a seriously bitter round of contract negotiations for the past year and a half. The pervasively stressful work environment was like nothing I'd ever experienced. You had to prepare yourself for work each day as if you were going into mental combat.

As members of the union, the three of us filed a grievance that slowly wended its way through the informal and formal processes. Grievances filed against an institution for violations of contract follow a specific timeline outlined in that contract. After a series of truly horrific meetings that will stay with me forever, the college categorically denied that any contract violations had been committed and stated that all three full-time librarians would be gone at the end of the term to be replaced by two new nebulous positions with the title of Learning Commons Specialists. These positions would be staff, not faculty, and the compensation rate was greatly reduced. An MLS was not a requirement for filling the positions. This was the central argument for doing away with us: the library was turning into a Learning Commons and was morphing into a different entity. No librarians needed, thank you very much.

Meanwhile, back at the war table of contract negotiations, the situation had devolved to the point that the Faculty Association was in full swing planning the impending strike. The Oregon Education Association bigwigs were on campus frequently, not only assigning us all tasks, but also teaching us how to talk to the press, walk a picket line, and trying to calm us down as a heightened sense of anxiety spread.

Just like in a predictable movie, the strike was averted at the eleventh hour. I can't overstate the tremendous work and advocacy on the part of the Bargaining Team and Faculty Association leadership that went into avoiding a strike. And though I have learned that union bargaining is an art unto itself, I don't have to like it.

At MHCC, each side knew its own group's pain point, but it took over a year to slowly inch along at immense costs to the institution measured out in negative publicity, loss of tuition dollars as students left, huge rifts between administration and employees, and enormous amounts of stress shared by the college community. The deep wounds at MHCC will take a long time to heal.

June 30th arrived and I left MHCC. The grievance we'd filed reached its endgame, which is filing for arbitration. Arbitration occurs when neither side can come to an agreement over a labor dispute and the matter is taken up by the state's Employee Relations Board for a hearing. A state arbiter listens to both sides and makes a binding decision that both sides must accept, similar to a judge's ruling in a trial. As with all union matters, negotiations commence when choosing an arbiter. Based on past decisions, some arbiters are seen to favor the employee while others favor the employer. It took until August for both sides to settle on an arbiter and schedule our arbitration hearing, which wouldn't be held until the beginning of December, 2011. That meant that we were out of work for the entire fall term, while the library operated with part-time librarians and the new "learning specialists."

Though our grievance was taking the better part of a year to resolve, during this time there was, amazingly, a lot to inspire us. The advocacy of others to our cause carried us through this difficult time. People believed in us as necessary professionals integral to the institution and were vocal about expressing their support.

Ever since I entered the field of librarianship, there has been much discussion in the professional literature and at conferences about the status of the profession, especially in academic libraries. Should we be faculty or support staff? Should we be tenure-track? How do we protect our professional status? ACRL's Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians asserts that librarians in academic institutions should have faculty status, thus ensuring the "same rights and responsibilities as for other members of the faculty" (2007).

For the purposes of this article, I will set aside the tenure issue and focus on the rights afforded to academic librarians who have faculty status. Being faculty allowed the three librarians at MHCC to engage in important committee work that was beneficial to furthering the library's mission and goals within the campus community. The work for the committees that the three of us served on included approving new and revised curricula, developing college strategic-planning initiatives, engaging in educational assessment oversight, and making college budgeting decisions. Perhaps most importantly, we had a seat at the table for the powerhouse weekly Faculty Senate meeting. Senate is where a great deal of decisions are made at MHCC. Everyone knew the three librarians because we took our faculty status very seriously and provided a tremendous amount of service to the college.

All three of us were also very involved in collaborating with instructional faculty on helping to develop curricula across a wide range of subjects. Instructional faculty relied

on us greatly for research and information literacy needs. Because of our good work and our faculty status, we were looked at by a great many of the instructional faculty as trusted peers. We became indispensable to them. This is part of advocacy: when you become a necessary peer to those in your institution who have a voice, you gain their support.

When news spread that the three librarians were to be laid off at the end of the academic year, instructors, both full- and part-time, were very upset, and not just because of the union mentality of protecting each other at all costs. Many of them had come to rely on us so much that they were at a loss as to who would teach the information literacy curriculum in their classes and help with research needs. There were several highly charged board meetings during the spring of 2011 where the librarian layoffs were brought up. Pro-library chants were shouted outside the board room for those who couldn't get in (the room being a limited-occupancy space with the board refusing to move to a bigger venue), students making eloquent speeches arguing against the decision to lay us off, and people holding up signs pleading to save the librarians. I cried a lot during these board meetings.

Also tremendous in their show of support were my library colleagues, both locally and nationally. This is a second aspect of successful advocacy for the profession: be involved. All three of the librarians at MHCC have been involved in organizations locally and regionally. A handful of the offices held by the three of us included treasurer of the Oregon Library Association, vice president of ACRL-OR, and Steering Team member at Orbis Cascade Alliance's Electronic Resources Committee. Because we were active within our professional community, it was that much easier to rally our colleagues to our cause.

The e-mails and phone calls started rolling in to MHCC administrators. The outpouring of support was overwhelming. ACRL-OR leadership wrote a letter to MHCC in support of reinstating us. Local librarian bloggers wrote columns about us. Librarians from Texas, California, and Arizona wrote letters of support. We contacted *Library Journal*, and two articles about us were written for their online publication.

This is a third aspect of successful advocacy: make sure to get the word out. I am a rather private person, and to have something so personally difficult broadcast to so many people was hard on me. Nevertheless, I absolutely wanted the spotlight focused directly on this awful decision. I wanted our story to be all over the internet. I wanted all that outrage leveled at MHCC leadership. The three of us contacted as many colleagues as we could. We also enlisted the help of others to contact people so it wasn't coming just from the three of us.

Ultimately, this story has a bittersweet ending. With the start of the new school year in September, 2011, MHCC underwent, as a result of the tremendous upheaval of the previous year, a substantial change in upper-level management. The incoming leadership inherited a traumatized institution and a mess of unresolved problems including the librarian layoffs. They also inherited all that outrage from internal and external sources over the decision to replace librarians with non-librarians and reclassify them to a support staff position. In late October, 2011, the Faculty Association, representing our interests, worked with the new administrators at MHCC to hammer out a settlement, because neither side wanted to go to arbitration. We signed off on the settlement in November, 2011.

The settlement stated that Julia and I could choose to return to faculty librarian positions within the library starting January, 2012. Should we decide not to return, the college would have to replace us with faculty-status, full-time librarians. We were "made whole," which means we received our back pay for all the time we'd missed and no break in service in terms of retirement benefits. Anna had already jumped (the sinking) ship earlier. She had enough

additional graduate credits to qualify to teach in the Business Technology and Computer Information Systems departments at MHCC, so she took advantage of the reassignment provision in the faculty contract and was working full-time teaching classes. She elected not to return to the library. After much reflection, both Julia and I returned to work, but our time there was short. Our positions had been changed so significantly that this, along with other life circumstances, helped precipitate our early departures. Julia retired, though she continues to work in a limited part-time capacity for MHCC doing collection development. In April, 2012, I sold my house and relocated to southern Arizona with my husband.

This spring, the MHCC Library is finishing up the hiring process to replace Julia and me. The third position was lost to the library when Anna moved to another department, so the library is now back to only two full-time faculty librarians. It's bittersweet because though we "won" our grievance settlement, the library lost over 25 years of collective experience. All the hard work over the years of building relationships and making inroads in spreading information literacy across the curriculum has taken a large step backwards. It will be built again of course, but that will take time.

The advocacy of our library colleagues and our college community was instrumental in turning the tide in our favor and I thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart for your support. In order to get this kind of support you must position yourselves to be integral to your institution. Be involved in your library community; getting to know your regional colleagues makes a difference during hard times. Finally, don't be afraid to ask for help and broadcast your plight in as many venues as possible. I have personally experienced the power of successful advocacy and its ability to make positive change a reality.

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Internships

A Mutually Rewarding Experience

The job market is more competitive than ever, and internships can give new Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) graduates a leg up in their job searches.

"Internships allow students to give different LIS career pathways a test drive, gain practical hands-on experience, build relevant skills to add to their résumé, and engage in valuable professional networking opportunities," said Jill Klees, San José State University career center liaison to the School of Library and Information Science.

The San José State University School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) invites members of the Oregon Library Association to take advantage of this mutual learning experience by becoming internship supervisors and sharing their knowledge with aspiring information professionals.

Internship supervisors collaborate with SLIS faculty to provide rich, structured field learning experiences for students in a variety of professional settings. As interns gain new knowledge, explore career options, and expand their professional connections, they also participate in a two-way exchange of knowledge with their site supervisors and other employees at their host institutions.

"Interns not only contribute their time and work to our library, but also give us an opportunity to stay up-to-date on what is being taught in graduate schools and receive fresh input about current practices," said Alba Scott, internship supervisor and librarian, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Graduate students enrolled in the ALA-accredited, fully online MLIS program at San José State University can select from more than 225 internship opportunities each semester. SLIS students live across North America, including Oregon. Learn how you can host an intern: http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/interns

The School of Library and Information Science at San José State University offers robust curricula for aspiring information professionals including two fully online master's degrees, a fully online certficate program, and a doctoral program: Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS), Master of Archives and Records Administration (MARA), Post-Master's Certificate in Library and Information Science, and the San José Gateway PhD Program.

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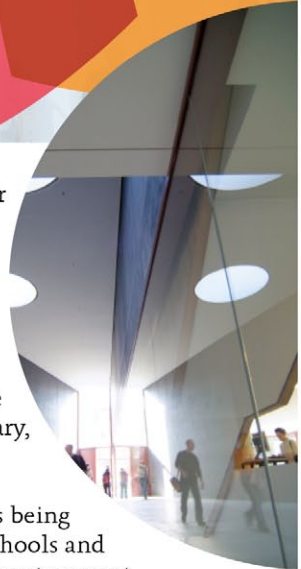
Abigail, George & Nan
Talk about Library Advocacy

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Abigail Elder is the current President of OLA. She has worked in several Oregon libraries and is now director of the Tualatin Public Library. As OLA president and as a public library director, she advocates for libraries every day.

George Bell has been recognized with life-time OLA membership for his service to Oregon libraries. He has served on the boards of Salem Public Library and the State Library, and on OLA's Legislative committee. His professional background includes working as a reporter and a public affairs manager for state agencies.

Nan Heim has advocated for libraries as OLA's lobbyist for over two decades. She owns and manages a public affairs firm and considers advocacy by librarians themselves to be essential for OLA's success.

Abigail, George and Nan got together recently to talk about advocacy for libraries. George suggested that Abigail, as the professional librarian, be the moderator.

Librarians advocating in communities

Abigail: The first question I have is, since librarians sometimes tend to think of libraries as the center of the universe, what is the greater landscape that we should be considering?

George: A great question. It's my perception that librarians need to reach out more to their communities. I think they see themselves as public servants rather than as advocates who should pound the table trying to persuade people.

Nan: But librarians must be doing something right. They've been so successful at getting support locally for their libraries.

George: Absolutely! All four libraries levies just passed in the May election. A substantial part of the public reveres their libraries. When a person goes to a public library, he or she gets first-class treatment, all the help he could possibly want.

But I see precious little outreach. I don't see librarians out meeting with neighborhood associations, for example. Neighborhood associations meet regularly, and they're always looking for speakers. What if the library director made a date to go speak to a neighborhood association once a year to explain new programs, new books, all that you do.

Abigail: The rotary, the Kiwanis, all those groups are always looking for speakers. I have a ten-point slide show that I take around at a moment's notice. I talk about books and services, about how the library is a good steward of your tax dollars.

George: That's just what we need.

Library advocacy at the Legislature

Nan: At the state level, I think we've been very successful in advocating for things that don't involve spending state money.

George: First Amendment issues, for example.

Nan: Yes. I think the fact that librarians have been successful at the local level hurts at the Legislature in terms of funding. Legislators know that local support for libraries is strong and they feel no obligation to rescue you. What concerns me lately is a buzz has started that maybe we have too many libraries. It started with law libraries, but it seems to be spreading

George: I think there is a perception, getting stronger, that libraries have not kept up with technology and are about to be overtaken by technology. Who needs the library if you have a Kindle?

Nan: OLA is asking all the public library directors to invite legislators to take part in summer reading to children, at a busy time of day, to show how many people still use libraries.

George: Hallelujah!

Nan: It's important to show Ready to Read at work, but also to show libraries as busy places to counter that "too many libraries" buzz.

George: How does it look for the next session?

Nan: Okay for now, but with the slow recovery of the economy and budget cuts, you never know.

Abigail: That's why getting our legislators into the libraries this summer is critical.

Nan: Exactly! I should mention that our event at the Capitol every session is a great advocacy event. Legislators come and choose donated children's books for a school or public library of their choice. Other organizations envy us because so many legislators come. They love choosing children's books.

Children as library advocates

Abigail: It often comes down to people using libraries as a child or their children using libraries.

Nan: I hear that all the time from legislators and other people: how thrilled their children are about going to the library and finding books, even with computers at home!

George: Toddlers coming in and getting books … that's money in the bank for libraries!

Nan: I have an anecdote about how children can be great advocates for libraries. Back in the '90s, we were fighting a bill in the Legislature to mandate filters on public library computers. Our argument was that the decision should be made at the local level. But it was an uphill fight in committee.

At a hearing, a group of school children came in on tour, just to watch and listen. They were around 11. One legislator said, "I've heard these filters aren't very effective. I'd like to ask these children, do you think you could break through these filters?"

The children were great! They said, "We could do it in two or three minutes!" It was a turning point for our success in killing the bill. It was totally unplanned, but it showed what great advocates children can be.

Abigail: I remember being at a budget hearing and a Boy Scout stood up in his uniform. He talked about the library, how important it was to him and how he'd been going there since he was two. No one is going to argue with a Boy Scout! It ended up on the front page of the paper with a photo.

George: That's what's been happening here in Salem. City government warned people weeks ago they were facing a terrible shortfall, millions of dollars. They scheduled half a dozen budget hearings around town. Citizens showed up and brought their kids to testify. It works! The library cuts have been reversed.

Nan: B.J. at Salem Public has a wonderful idea for the project this summer, bringing legislators to read to children. She's going to have it part of their program to have note paper and crayons for children to write thank you notes to the legislators who read to them.

Abigail: You're going to see those thank you notes on legislators' walls!

The message: Books, books and more

Nan: So what are the best messages about libraries? Books, research?

Abigail: OCLC says books are our brand. Technology and other services are important, but books are still our basic, most important message. People identify with books. It can be a book on a Kindle or an actual paper book. But people equate libraries with books, and that's a popular message.

George: There's a threat out there we need to address: private, for-profit libraries. This needs to be headed off by talking about all the services we provide: where we are now, what we're doing, and where we hope to go. These private companies are coming in and saying they can do all this more cheaply. That's nonsense. People need to know what libraries are providing and what kind of training it takes to provide it.

Abigail: Contracting out for private management is a threat to the fundamental core of libraries, our responsiveness to our communities, and our democratic piece.

Nan: Legislators tell me nostalgic stories about their childhood experiences with libraries. We shouldn't abandon the power of nostalgia.

Abigail: We talk about the digital divide. Even though I might have a computer at home, I still want it out there for people who don't: kids who need to do homework and people looking for jobs. Every job requires you to apply online these days. I recently helped someone applying for a job as a fry cook, a job that would never require you to use a computer, but you could only apply online.

Who should deliver the message?

Abigail: We've talked about children and librarians as messengers to the community about the value of librarians. Who else could deliver our message?

George: I wonder if we've made quite enough use of our library boards, advisory committees and volunteers. In Salem, we have Friends of the Library, a dedicated group raising money in their shop for the library. We need to enlist those people to talk for us. I had an op-ed piece in the *Statesman Journal* three months ago on the Salem library being the worst funded in the state for comparably sized libraries, and how the library needed more support to continue the great things it does.

I got positive feedback from the article except for one woman who called and griped. Only one, but that's out there. The best way to counter that is to have volunteers out there defending the library.

Nan: I think some people who **don't** use the library appreciate it.

George: They can understand its importance to the community.

Nan: Someone was saying the other day that maybe we've put too much emphasis on bricks and mortar. I think library facilities—bricks and mortar—are important as community centers.

George: Absolutely. It's no accident that in Salem the public library is next door to City Hall.

Abigail: And the people who work in our cities. For everyone who comes to work in our city, I give a welcome packet with a library card application, facts about the library and how the library can help them do their job. We offer to put their informational brochures on display.

Sound bites and Sign-off

Abigail: One last thing: Everyone uses sound bites. We need to make sure they use **our** sound bites. When someone mentions our library to our Mayor, he always says, "One thousand people a day!" That's the sound bite I've given him.

George: I've told you everything I know …

Nan: No, you haven't!

George: Well, I'm starting to think about you having to transcribe all of this.

Nan: Okay, we're done!

Library Advocacy at a Liberal Arts College via a Library Advancement Coordinator

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Aubrey R. Watzek Library
Lewis & Clark College

Librarians or staff dedicated to advancing the library's public relations and fundraising efforts are common in academic research libraries across the country, where the library often works with central advancement and development offices to promote and benefit both the library and the institution as a whole. At smaller college libraries, however, these responsibilities often come under the purview of the director, if there is the time and opportunity to focus on them very much at all.

Seeking leadership development and an expanded skill set, in 2007 I met with Lewis & Clark's Watzek Library Director Jim Kopp to discuss new responsibilities and possible directions for my career. As was his administrative style, Jim was thoughtful and considerate in his approach, and over the course of many weeks we discussed my interests and strengths and reflected on current and future needs of the library. My work with the library's marketing team to promote resources and services to patrons, and my interest in outreach to campus constituencies not generally associated with the library, correlated with Jim's ambition to raise the library's profile at Lewis & Clark and beyond. A position focused on communications and outreach seemed a likely possibility; however, when Jim proposed a position entitled Library Advancement Coordinator, I was unsure what he meant.

A Library Advancement Coordinator is a unique position in liberal arts college libraries, where many assume the primacy of the library is understood by all. However, due to numerous factors, this is not always the case, and the library has a responsibility to educate its institutional colleagues about its value, both on and off campus. College libraries engage their campus communities in a variety of ways, most often focusing on academic life and the primary clientele of students and faculty. However, as Jim pointed out, there are additional constituencies a robust library needs to consider and with whom it needs to develop strong relationships to build campus-wide support. These include budget allocating administrators, central development officers, public relations specialists, academic support and administrative staff, as well as alumni, donors, and friends. Just as libraries engage their campus communities by having liaisons to academic departments, establishing relationships with additional campus offices can help to raise college-wide understanding and appreciation of the library.

The primary responsibilities of the Library Advancement Coordinator at Lewis & Clark have been to focus the library's external communications, coordinate large events, and build bridges with campus constituencies which had not been engaged in an organized way in the past, beginning with Institutional Advancement. This division of the college is responsible for coordinating the efforts of Public Affairs and Communications, Alumni and Parent Relations, and Central Development. Inroads have been made in each of these areas over the past few years, with varying levels of success.

The library's marketing team was responsible for maintaining a news blog on the library homepage to highlight current exhibits and events, new acquisitions, and other items of public interest. However, these items were not promoted beyond the library site to potentially reach a wider audience. After working with the marketing team to fine-tune the news feature and create a library events page, promotion of library news to the office of Public Affairs and Communications has developed to the point where all library events are automatically submitted for posting on the college's online events calendar, and library news is submitted for consideration as campus news features on the college website and as stories for the college alumni magazine. Similarly, the library sends information to the student newspaper for on-campus coverage, so both internal and external audiences are better informed.

Outreach to Alumni and Parent Relations has led to improved communication of

library services for alumni and better library support of alumni and parent activities. In the past, Watzek Library's Special Collections and Archives had worked most closely with this office to support their efforts and showcase collections. The library continues to develop and sponsor events for alumni and parents, and participation has expanded to a point where staff from all library departments are now involved when Watzek hosts "coffee breaks" for parents during New Student Orientation and Family Weekend. The library has also made efforts to become a space where alumni receptions and other campus events can be held in support of the campus community.

With no formal experience in fundraising, my work with Central Development has presented the largest learning curve. I now have a better understanding of how relationships are built with donors through identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship, and I more fully appreciate the important and challenging role of this office. After establishing a formal contact with a staff person in Central Development who agreed to serve as a library liaison, I am working to better communicate library needs and articulate the potential the library brings to campus fundraising. In my role as Library Advancement Coordinator, I have reviewed the giving history of the library's donor base, created new stewardship initiatives by sending annual mailings to highlight achievements over the past year, and thanked donors for their support. Most recently this was done as an online Year in Review with an accompanying postcard with the Year in Review's URL mailed to donors and friends. (Library, 2012) Although there is still tremendous opportunity for growth in this relationship, significant groundwork has been laid.

In an effort to promote the library to campus staff who might not think of it as a resource for professional needs and leisure activities, the marketing team created a Staff Services brochure to complement the brochures already in place for students and faculty. Digital copies were sent to staff, and print copies were sent to the College's Human Resources office for distribution to new employees. As a result of outreach to Human Resources, a stop at the library is now included during the campus tours given to new employees. This visit provides an opportunity for the library to welcome new employees and briefly introduce them to resources for professional and personal use. The intention is that the library will become more visible and remembered as a resource for everyone on campus, and perhaps be considered a benefit of employment at the college. Watzek Library has also supported staff development programs sponsored by Human Resources by organizing events highlighting Special Collections and facilitating a faculty and staff book club discussion.

With the changing nature of research and information environments, academic libraries of all sizes benefit from reflection on their roles and responsibilities, and from consideration of the value libraries bring to campus, as well as how this value can be better articulated and promoted. In terms of establishing the new role of Library Advancement Coordinator at Watzek Library, the vision and support of Jim Kopp cannot be overstated, as well as my participation in the Academic Library Advancement and Development Network (ALADN) for professional development in these areas. Although nobody ever graduates from a library as they do from an academic department, few graduate without them, and, now more than ever, it is important to share with colleagues across campus how the library benefits the entire college. ✧

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"Will Work for Work"
Facing Position Elimination

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Picture a startlingly beautiful April day. I am walking up to the library, enjoying the splendor of our new building and brimming with ideas and energy I have taken away from recently attending PLA in Boston. As I open the doors, I am unexpectedly greeted by my boss, the Community Services/Library Director. She walks me through the library rather than letting me go directly back to my desk. We exchange guarded pleasantries as she leads me to a conference room. There, the City Manager is waiting. I take a seat and look from face to face. I see tears welling in my boss's eyes. The City Manager speaks, but the only words I hear are, "… your position has been eliminated."

Mine was one of five middle-management positions targeted for elimination to save the city an estimated $500,000. The unexpected loss of my position was not the only significant change coming for the library, others were looming as well: the rapidly-approaching departures of both the Community Services/Library Director and the Circulation Supervisor; library hours were scheduled to be reduced; a county-wide operating levy was on an upcoming ballot; and there was great uncertainty whether the replacement for the Director would have a library background.

Initially, it was difficult not to take the loss personally. This was my first professional library position. I had devoted the past 10 years to developing and refining my place in the organization. What about loyalty? What about dedication?

Surprisingly, after some reflection, I found I was more concerned for the future of the library than for myself. It was the bigger picture of the mission of the library, the wellbeing of staff, and the value to the community that were important. My priority became positioning the library to run effectively and efficiently with uncertain leadership and, in doing so, possibly earn my job back. I needed to get the library on solid footing before my scheduled departure at the end of June, only 85 days away, but how? It felt like it was me against the world.

Fortunately, just weeks into the process, the City hired a library consultant to evaluate library services and work on staff stabilization. Stabilizing the staff was designated a priority. This was where I embarked on a journey of both self-advocacy and library advocacy.

Countless conversations, e-mails, and impassioned pleas from the Library Board ensued, hoping to trigger a move in a positive direction for the library. As it ended up, though, the real work was up to the library consultant, the City Manager, and me. The three of us worked together very closely. There were more meetings, phone calls, and e-mails. At times we worked as a team, sometimes one-on-one. We all expected results quickly. The consultant and I worked ardently on a staffing plan. The consultant, alone, worked on her recommendations to city administration for the library's future. Progress was sometimes difficult. The City Manager was busy, the consultant was off-site with other obligations, and I still had my job to do. There were times when I felt the wheels were spinning, but we were getting nowhere.

Eleven weeks after being let go as Deputy Library Director, the announcement was made that I would fill the newly-created position of Library Manager. I was relieved, and so were the staff, the Board, and the community. We had come to an agreement about the position but there was still much work to do and I was able to get back to it. When I did, I found my work had been altered by the experience and shifted in a new direction. My next project was a detailed presentation for the City Council on future scenarios for the library. But that is another story …

The process had certainly not been smooth, but challenging, frustrating, and rewarding all at the same time. What I came away with were valuable lessons learned, both personal and professional. I believe they were the keys to our success.

1. Don't take it personally

Position elimination in the public library world usually has to do with dollars and cents, not our abilities as library professionals. The sooner you can rid yourself of the voice that keeps nagging that it was something YOU did, the sooner you can start seeing the positive and begin to move ahead. Doubtless, being downsized can be one of life's most deflating experiences, but it can also be the beginning of something new.

2. Play well with others

Difficult as it may be, you need to show the willingness to cooperate and work with those very individuals who may have placed you in this difficult situation. You need to strengthen your relationships with them. Not only does it build their confidence in your capabilities, but it builds the foundation for a continued partnership that encourages lasting success.

3. Talk, talk, TALK!

Communicate. This is not the time to shut down and hold a grudge. You must work to create a stronger future, for the library and hopefully for yourself. It is incredibly important to provide information in terms relevant to decision-makers. Forget sweet anecdotes about happy children and story-times for now, and think data, numbers, and results. Seek and offer feedback. Be brave. When I went beyond my normal comfort level and said something difficult or challenging, I bolstered my spirits by thinking, "What can they do, fire me?!"

4. Turn crisis into opportunity by building your knowledge base

Look for possibilities, not roadblocks. Once you determine you can move on, look to things that elevate your potential, not those that keep you in a quagmire. I found that I had the latitude to stretch the boundaries of what I thought I was supposed to be doing as a library professional and really challenged myself to try new things. Where I had always said, "I'm a words person, not a numbers person," I now saw that it was in my best interest to learn how to craft a spreadsheet and learn more about budget law. I ran more calculations, projected more possibilities, and created more scenarios than I ever imagined I could. Those skills serve me well to this day.

5. Make the best out of the worst situation

Be a hero. If to no one else, be one for yourself. Maintain a positive attitude and a professional manner. Give your best and you will receive the best from others. Keep your sense of humor and learn to rely on your strengths and intuition. Don't let them see that you feel you have been let down, forge on with your head up.

6. Know that change is difficult but inevitable

A tired saying, but true. As you are going through your metamorphosis, remember that others might not be comfortable following along. Some people will never be able to adjust to change, and they will find their own means of making peace with the differences in you and your workplace.

7. Listen to wise voices

There are mentors all around us. They may be younger, in other professions, even standing in the line at the grocery store. Be open to what they have to say, and be open to accepting their support. You don't want to shut people out, thinking you can "do this on your own." This is the time to embrace the opportunity to learn from others. Listen.

8. Shine, Don't Whine

This is something else I follow to this day. Do not convey the image of the "poor library" or "poor me." Bring positive attention to the situation by demonstrating a "can do" attitude and highlighting successes. Decision-makers quickly tire of "we can't do it because we don't have …" but are surprisingly attentive when an accomplishment is announced which might shine positive light on them as well as the library.

9. Always be working on "Plan B"

All the while you are doing this very honorable work for the future of the library, don't forget about yourself. Talk to colleagues. Put out feelers. Update your resume. Look for possible opportunities and apply for them. Take advantage of outplacement services. Be ready for change and pay attention to yourself.

As I read a draft of this to my husband he gently suggested it sounded too idealistic. He wondered how many people would actually have been willing to take a similar approach. I reminded him I wasn't writing this for just anyone, I was writing for "library people," many of whom have chosen this profession with great passion and dedication. And, while I recognize mine was a very unique situation, I believe the lessons I learned were extremely valuable and can be applied in many situations, not just troubling job loss.

It is possible to overcome disappointment and frustration with patience and determination. Once I was on the right course, I found that experience takes time. My process of learning did not end the day I regained my job—that continued well into the following months, as it still does today.

I was fortunate to have extremely supportive coworkers, incredibly wise mentors, loyal friends and family, and a caring spouse who helped me deal with a very complex and stressful time in my career.

To say that I had to grow both personally and professionally is an understatement. I learned to take responsibility for the library's future and my own and, I believe, we have both become stronger as a result.

The Issues that Find You and Refine You

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September 2011 marked a rather somber start to the academic year for the Oregon Chapter of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL-OR). One of Oregon's community college libraries, Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC), was facing a major crisis. As part of the college's contract negotiations, the library's three librarians were among seven faculty members being laid off.

The reverberations from the Mt. Hood situation left their mark on the ACRL-OR board. The incoming president, Anna Johnson, was one of the three MHCC librarians laid off. Anna resigned her board position, as she needed to pursue other employment. While this turn of events was a little bit confusing and a little bit challenging for the ACRL-OR board, it also heralded a year which in many ways has been defined by the idea of advocacy.

Since that September, the ACRL-OR board has been asked to advocate for a number of Oregon librarians facing crises and challenges. With each new request, the board has learned more about navigating these situations: what resources and support we can best offer and how to connect ACRL-OR members to the support of their community. These opportunities have served to develop and deepen our understanding of what it means to be advocates for academic libraries and librarians in Oregon.

Context

Like everyone else, Oregon's academic libraries are feeling pressures that stem from shrinking budgets, rising costs, and technologically driven change. Tuition-driven institutions face challenges when the economy makes it difficult for people to pay private school tuition. At the same time, when unemployment levels rise, Oregon's state-supported colleges find themselves in a classic bind: enrollments go up as people strive to make themselves more attractive to employers, while the state's contributions to their budgets shrink. All of Oregon's colleges and universities are facing challenges, but it is likely that no institutions are feeling this particular pressure more acutely than Oregon's community colleges.

Money has never been plentiful for most libraries in Oregon, and academic librarians are used to doing more with less. The importance of demonstrating our value and measuring our impact is a constant theme; academic librarians definitely do not think their future is certain or assured. But while we talk about the possibility that colleges or universities might someday get rid of their libraries, that threat is usually hypothetical, raised when someone wants to make a strong case that some new change (usually, but not always, technological) is going to threaten our very existence.

One reason the threat to academic libraries has seemed like a distant possibility is the accreditation process, which has always provided a type of safety net; to be accredited, an institution must provide adequate library resources. The accreditation body for most of Oregon's colleges and universities is the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. This body's standards for accreditation include an entire section (NWCCU, 2.E) outlining the library's resources and services.

The NWCCU standards for accreditation specify that an institution must have adequate library and information resources, and that faculty with teaching responsibilities must partner with library personnel to ensure that instruction in the use of library resources is integrated into the learning process (NWCCU, 2.C.6). Accreditation standards for Oregon's colleges and universities do not articulate the term "librarian;" they do describe, however, library resources chosen by "data that include feedback from affected users and appropriate library and information resources, faculty, staff and administrators" (NWCCU, 2.E.2),

which reflects the professional work that librarians do regarding collection development. The standards also require library instruction that "… enhances … efficiency and effectiveness in obtaining, evaluating, and using library and information resources that support its programs and services …" (NWCCU, 2.E.3), reflecting the professional work that librarians do with regard to information literacy instruction and reference services.

In other words, while the accrediting language doesn't use the word "librarian," the professional acumen required to select and organize a collection, to teach and provide reference services, and to conduct data-driven assessments of resources and services, is that of a professional librarian. At the current time, all of Oregon's academic libraries employ at least one professional librarian, though, as the case studies we are about to describe illustrate, that fact is not a given.

Academic librarians in Oregon are represented professionally by ACRL-OR. ACRL-OR plays a unique, bridging role in our professional community because it serves both as a local chapter of a national organization for academic libraries (ACRL) and as the academic division of the statewide library association (OLA). ACRL-OR members are members of both OLA and ACRL-OR, and the ACRL-OR President sits on the OLA Executive Board.

This tight connection between the academic library association and the broader statewide library community does not exist in every state. In many states, including our neighbors to the north, the academic and statewide library associations operate entirely separately. In Oregon, academic libraries are part of the statewide association's lobbying and advocacy efforts.

Issues that find you:
Case Study 1: Mt. Hood Community College
In April of 2011, Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC) was facing an anticipated $5.5 million dollar budget shortfall for the coming school year and was in the midst of labor negotiations with faculty. It was at this time that the college administration gave layoff notices to seven faculty members, including all three faculty librarians.

Jeff Ring, the director of Library Services for MHCC, was quoted in *Library Journal* saying, "the layoffs would save $380,000," and that, "the work of the faculty librarians would be picked up by other professional librarians on staff who do not have the title of faculty librarian," (Kelley, 2011). He also indicated the decision did not target librarians with faculty status. The faculty librarians believed that they were being targeted because of their response to a breach in data privacy that had happened earlier that year (Kelley, 2011). The librarians filed a grievance indicating the college had violated their contractual rights in a number of areas, and the faculty union supported their grievance (Tichenor, 2011).

The MHCC librarians were active advocates for themselves, and reached out to others for help. They began by contacting their union representation and following their counsel. They took their situation to the press and to their professional organizations. They spoke with the *Oregonian, Library Journal,* and the MHCC school paper, *The Advocate*. And they contacted the ACRL-OR board for support.

Our immediate response was that, as the group representing the professional community of academic librarians in Oregon, we should play a role. Because a situation like this had never come before the Board, though, we had to figure out that role as we responded to the situation; there were no existing policies or procedures to guide us.

Because ACRL-OR is connected to both ACRL and OLA, we started by contacting both of those parent organizations for guidance. ACRL indicated that advocacy should stay within

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the framework outlined for organizations with a charitable 501c3 status. This was useful guidance in a broader sense, but given that the situation here was neither political nor legislative (as defined at www.irs.gov), it did not suggest a way forward on this particular question.

The Board decided a letter of support for the faculty librarians, directed to the President of MHCC as he was reviewing their grievance, was the appropriate response. The letter articulated the importance of faculty librarians to the educational mission of MHCC and outlined how this decision would negatively affect the students, faculty and reputation of the college. The Oregon Library Association Board voted to partner with ACRL-OR on this letter. The outcome was mixed. MHCC's President reviewed the grievance but did not stop the process, and the faculty librarians were laid off. State arbitration for the librarians' grievance was set for December. In the interim, one librarian found reassignment at MHCC before the start of the new school year, and the others engaged in part-time work or unemployment. In October, the librarians were notified by faculty union leadership that a settlement would be offered by the college rather than wait for arbitration. The librarians met to discuss the settlement, which included all back pay for two of the librarians as well as jobs as faculty librarians (albeit with different job descriptions). The librarian who had become an instructor in another department decided not to return to the library, and her faculty position was transferred to her new department. Both librarians who returned to the library in January, 2012, have since left. One retired and one is seeking employment out of state (T. Hazen, personal communication, March 16, 2012).

Case Study 2: Clatsop Community College

In 2011, Clatsop Community College (Clatsop CC) learned that it would receive about $1,000,000 less in state funding than it had expected; other revenue streams were also expected to be lower than they had been in previous years. Required by law to balance the budget every year, college administrators announced sweeping cuts in November, including layoffs for 15 of the college's 39 full-time faculty members (Stratton, 2011).

Included in the 15 faculty layoffs was the college's only faculty librarian. This would leave Clatsop CC as the only college or university in Oregon with no professional librarian on staff. The librarian in question reached out to colleagues in the Oregon library community, but not ACRL-OR. The library director at another community college, aware of this situation and concerned about the precedent it would set, contacted the ACRL-OR board to see if there was anything we could do.

Having recently gone through the experience with MHCC, the Board had some precedent to use in this situation and we were able to respond more quickly. The ACRL-OR President contacted the librarian at Clatsop CC and asked if a letter would be helpful. We found out that a public hearing was scheduled, and that while the librarian had been granted time to speak, having a letter to be read into the record would significantly increase the time devoted to the library issue. Given that the hearing was a matter of days away, we had a tight timeline to work with to maximize our impact.

The ACRL-OR President drafted a letter addressed to the College Board of Directors and to the college President and contacted OLA's President to see if he would be willing to co-sign. This letter focused on the important role a faculty librarian plays in student learning and faculty support and highlighted the accreditation requirements that would be impacted by this decision.

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Meanwhile, the librarian found a respected member of her campus community to read the letter into the record at the meeting, and spoke directly on her own behalf.

The outcome in this situation was also mixed, but encouraging. Recognizing the significance of eliminating all professional librarians from the college faculty, the institution reclassified the librarian's position as Library Director and reduced the position to 70 percent, with a strong likelihood that it will be increased to full-time in the near future.

How they refined us

In both of these cases, the ACRL-OR board was approached for help by people already in the middle of a crisis. They needed help immediately and we wanted to provide it, so we had to develop a plan for how to do it as we did it. It was really only afterwards, when it was possible to look back and reflect, that we realized how much we also learned about why we should be advocates.

It's in our Mission

It is probably not surprising that ACRL-OR's mission statement suggests some of the ways that a professional association should advocate for the profession. Our mission is:

> *to foster communication among academic library personnel; to promote the development of Oregon's academic libraries; to sponsor educational programs of interest to academic library personnel; to serve as liaison between academic personnel and various other academic and library constituencies; and to advocate for academic libraries and library personnel on the state level.* (ACRL-OR)

Advocacy represents an ethic of care within the professional organization. We are called to uphold and support others within our profession. Speaking into situations that impact individual members or the goals of the profession is part of shepherding the organization. The officers elected to serve the membership are called to interpret and frame the advocacy process as situations are presented.

Our Perspective is Valuable

Academic librarians have been working hard to articulate the value we add to our institutions and to our communities. Advocacy means sharing what we know, as professionals, with decision makers who may be legitimately unaware of the implications of their decisions. We should look to give decision makers the information they need and then find ways to ensure they hear it. For example, in both of these cases, the Board's letters spoke to the ways that professional librarians in Oregon collaborate to increase efficiency and decrease costs. The Board also pointed to the existing anchors of accreditation and information literacy competencies and noted that removing librarians with expertise to access, evaluate, and use resources ethically has long-range consequences for the education of the student, the quality of the education at the institution, and the democracy education supports.

Accountability

The ACRL-OR Board came away from these, and other, experiences with the strong belief that sometimes it is important to advocate even when you do not believe that the final deci-

sion will change. We know that colleges and universities in Oregon are facing legitimate crises, and that sometimes it is not a matter of "if they only knew, they would change their minds."

Even in those difficult situations, it is important that our voices get added to the conversation. If there are people arguing that we should "eliminate the librarians," and we respond, "Well, don't eliminate all of them," then the entire conversation shifts to how many librarians to eliminate rather than focusing on the impact librarians have on student learning and on their campus communities. We need to articulate all of the reasons our campuses need librarians, in many cases need more librarians, thus ensuring the conversation stays focused on the true issues.

Beyond this, it is important that our colleges and universities are held accountable for their decisions. Sometimes it's just important to make sure they know that their decisions are noticed, and that any negative outcomes that result from those decisions will be noticed as well.

It also became clear to us that we needed to deal with each situation and each request for support individually. We do not believe that we can be as effective if we respond in a generic or general way. We may believe in the blanket statement that "all colleges need librarians," but the reasons librarians are needed vary from campus to campus. It is important that our responses reflect that, and that decision makers in each situation know it is their specific situation that is being watched.

Offering Support

Finally, some of the most important reasons for us to advocate are affective. It is important to us that our colleagues in crisis feel they are supported by their professional community. Whether or not we are able to change the outcome of a crisis situation, it is important to us that the people involved in situations like these know that they are part of a larger community and that they can find support in that community. When we explain why librarians are valuable, we are also explaining how these individual librarians are important to their campuses and their communities. This is another reason it is important to us that our responses be specific. When we go beyond "why libraries are important" to explain why these particular librarians are important, we also demonstrate to our colleagues that they are respected and valued by their professional community.

Conclusion

There were several reasons, therefore, why we believe that it is important that the ACRL-OR board continue to embrace an advocacy role. We have learned a great deal about when and where we can be most effective as advocates.

In both of the described cases, we became involved because someone reached out to us for help. In one of those cases, however, the person who found us was an interested third party. This is a real concern. The librarian in question was actively seeking help and in a very real way it was just luck that we were able to connect with her. This situation raised the question: how many opportunities for advocacy have passed us by, simply because someone didn't know we were a resource?

We realized we didn't want people already dealing with crisis situations to bear all the responsibility for reaching out to ACRL-OR. Being proactive is important so people know we are a resource, and we need to put the information they need in a place where they're likely to find it when crises arise. Therefore, the ACRL-OR board is working to create a proactive presence of advocacy resources on its web pages.

As we have worked through the cases described as well as others not described, we continue to be refined in the purpose and process of advocacy. The issues that surfaced in each case have reminded us of the value of our profession and the contributions librarians make to their individual communities and to our culture. As we embrace our role as advocates, we are mindful that in doing so we honor our mission, contribute a valuable perspective, encourage accountability, and provide support to our colleagues.

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OLA Quarterly Publication Schedule 2012

The *OLA Quarterly (OLAQ)* is the official publication of the Oregon Library Association. The *OLAQ* is indexed by *Library Literature & Information Science* and *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts.* To view PDFs of issues, visit the OLAQ Archive on the OLA website. Full text is also available through HW Wilson's *Library Literature and Information Science Full Text* and EBSCO Publishing's *Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts (LISTA) with Full Text.*

Each issue is developed around a theme determined by the Communications Committee and Guest Editor(s). To suggest future topics for the *OLA Quarterly*, or to volunteer/nominate a Guest Editor, contact the OLAQ Coordinator.

Vol./No.	Theme	Deadline	Pub. Date	Guest Editor
Vol 18 • No. 3 Fall 2012	*Libraries and Museums: Preserving and Exposing Oregon's Cultural History*	September 1, 2012	October 15, 2012	Nancy Slight-Gibney, Director, Library Resource Management and Assessment, University of Oregon Libraries
Vol 18 • No. 4 Winter 2012	*Professional Development, an Update from 2008*	December 1, 2012	January 15, 2013	Steph Miller, Librarian, Multnomah County Library
Vol 19 • No. 1 Spring 2013	*Measuring Success*	February 1, 2013	March 15, 2013	Chris King Reference Librarian, Hillsboro Public Library & Karen Mejdrich Technical Services & Collection Development Manager, Hillsboro Public Library

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