



Editor's Keyboard

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Are there core competencies for the library profession? If so, can they be measured? These are questions taken up by columnist Robert F. Moran Jr. and authors Wanda V. Dole, Jitka M. Hurych, and Anne Liebst in this issue of *Library Administration*

and *Management*. Moran looks at competencies squarely in terms of traditional services, among them information access, user services, and library as place. But he adds one more important competency—entrepreneurship, the ability to exploit opportunities now present in the digital environment to provide better services for patrons. Like Moran, who looks at “core” library values as guideposts to help steer us into the digital world, Dole and her co-authors believe that administrators—at least the innovative ones—should take advantage of traditional methods of data collection to help chart the direction of their libraries. These range from the most basic kinds of information gathering, such as collection use and instructional statistics, to harder-to-pin data, such as patron satisfaction. The authors have chosen as their case study a group of library deans and senior administrators at Carnegie MA I universities in Kansas and Missouri. By using two survey instruments developed by Susan J. Beck, “A Culture of Assessment” and “Factors in Decision Making,” they were able to pinpoint myriad ways in which these administrators successfully use this information for decision making in their libraries. The authors also have provided an extensive, excellent bibliography for those interested in the development of core competencies within the profession.

This issue features the latest installment of the ChangeMasters series, which highlights a remarkable group of individuals who have helped steer the library profession into the twenty-first century. Add Betty J. Turock to the list of profiles, which so far has included Duane E. Webster, Richard Dougherty, Carla Stoffle, Harold S. Hacker, and Kathleen de la Peña McCook. Turock, a past president of ALA, was the driving force behind the Spectrum Initiative, which provides library education scholarships to students of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Turock calls the need to diversify our profession not just a “moral issue” but a “survival issue,” noting that “it was essential to make our demographics more diverse, like the population; otherwise, we could lose support for libraries.” The Spectrum Initiative, which began in 1995, with a million dollars in

funding from ALA, has so far helped educate more than two hundred and fifty librarians from different ethnic groups. What comes out of Turock’s description of her own career—however remarkable—is how similar it is to so many women of her generation, who entered the library profession in the ’60s and ’70s. These women were often young wives and mothers who defined themselves in those terms. They entered the library profession at the height of the women’s liberation movement and went on to transform the way in which American society viewed women in the professions. Turock’s experience was classic. She established herself as a library leader, partly through ALA committee work and through the network of women, who shared many of her same values and ideals—and went on to make a difference.

Florence Doksansky, in her interview with Eric Shoaf, talks about the complex skills needed to run a large organization such as Brown University Libraries, and about the difficulties and rewards of being an interim director. This is a wonderful case study of a woman who found herself suddenly directing a major research library. Like many of us who find ourselves in a new situation, she was able to rely on the skills she had developed—again those core library competencies—to step into this position.

In his article, James Jatkevicius provides a provocative view of the public library management structure and wonders to what extent committee decision making, group think, and the desire to reach a consensus at any cost hinders an organization. Using postmodernism as a metaphor, Jatkevicius proposes a management style that takes into account the many different—and often contradictory—perceptions of the workplace that are held by administrators and staff. Instead of an annual review or another evaluative tool, he suggests a focus group for employees that “would not be to establish goals for the employee but rather, to surround the issues with the varieties of employee experience and perception.” Jatkevicius’s piece is particularly interesting because it directly addresses the ambiguity often found in the workplace environment.

I would like to alert LAMA members—particularly newer members—to an experimental service we are initiating. Several experienced writers in the organization have volunteered to mentor writers who are exploring an article idea or who would like feedback on an article draft before they submit it to a professional journal—whether to *LA&M* or elsewhere. Please contact me if you would like more information about this at deyrupma@shu.edu.