

Report on Personal Competencies of Leadership held on November 27, 2007

The Personal Competencies of Leadership workshop, hosted by the Greater Edmonton Library Association was a successful move towards a new approach to our professional development offerings. The event featured two academic library speakers, Alice McNair, Director of Red Deer College Library, and Dan Mirau, Director of Concordia University College Library. The speakers were asked to avoid standard 'platitudes' around how one can develop one's own leadership, and instead to speak critically on their own leadership experiences. As well as discussing their own experiences, the speakers discussed several questions with the group:

- When you started your position did you feel you needed leadership development?
- How did you identify what you needed specifically to develop, and how did you go about developing it?
- What are the key challenges you face in your leadership role, & give examples of how you overcame them?
- What are the aspects / characteristics of your leadership style that have served you best in your career?
- How has your idea of leadership changed over the time you've served in this role?

The two speakers were at different career stages (early career and senior career), providing two perspectives on the subject. The two panelists spoke for 25 minutes each, after which three small discussion groups, each led by a GELA Executive member. The groups discussed these questions:

- Was there anything that either speaker said that surprised you about leadership?
- Are there aspects of leadership that you didn't hear Alice and Dan speak about?
- Do you believe you have adequate access to leadership opportunities?
- What kinds of opportunities would you like to see in your organization, school, or the library community?

The workshop was advertised directly to our membership via email, on local listservs, and via Facebook. We believe that poor weather on the workshop day was the key contributor to the lower-than-expected attendance (18 actual as compared to 30 expected). CACUL was noted as a sponsor on all publicity materials, and acknowledged verbally at the event itself. Both MLIS students and professional librarians attended the event, providing a networking opportunity for those just entering the profession to exchange ideas with those working in the field. While we would have preferred to have a higher number of attendees, these lower numbers contributed to allowing more people to contribute to the group discussions.

Evaluations received by workshop participants were very positive:

"The honesty was great! Nice and responsive."

"Thank you! An excellent session that I will try to incorporate into my bag of tricks!"

"Speakers were great."

One GELA member summarized her experience as follows:

"There was a real feeling of conversation between the audience and the speakers ... I think Alice and Dan were such great choices because they both really understood that we didn't want a lecture on leadership and they both dug deep to share their personal experiences in a way that people could learn something useful from. It also worked out well that they were in different stages of their careers. I think most of the people in the

room really related to Dan since he is early in his career but Alice was able to convey that a lot of times things don't happen overnight and that many of the successes in her library have really only come to fruition after 7-10 years of working on them.”

Revenue and Expense:

Expenses

Honoraria (2 speakers)*:		\$100
Speaker travel	\$332	
<u>Refreshments</u>	<u>\$180</u>	
Subtotal:		\$612

Revenue

Registrations (\$10 x 18 participants)	\$180	
<u>CACUL grant</u>	<u>\$400</u>	
Subtotal:		\$580

Revenue – expense: \$32

The CACUL grant allowed GELA to provide honoraria to the two speakers, and supported much of the travel costs for Alice McNair, a dynamic speaker from whom many students and newer professionals have not had the chance to learn.

This event marked GELA’s attempt to present a workshop highly attuned to the needs of students and new professionals (the majority of GELA’s leadership), incorporating interactive learning, and featuring content not easily found within the literature. Based on the success of this event, we would like to present more workshops in this format in the future.

*Note: As honoraria, donations were made in speakers’ names to the library charity of their choice.

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