THE POLITICAL LIBRARIAN

an everylibrary publication

Mission

The Political Librarian is dedicated to expanding the discussion of, promoting research on, and helping to re-envision locally focused advocacy, policy, and funding issues for libraries.

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Editorial Note

Dustin Fife

The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in times of great moral crisis, maintain their neutrality. --Dante Alighieri

In the public sphere, all is political, and no one can afford to claim neutrality. Libraries exist because countless people, with intentionality, worked to establish these essential services. They worked to pass laws and create political structures that support libraries and their communities. The political structures that support libraries are the direct interest of this journal: "*The Political Librarian* is dedicated to expanding the discussion of, promoting research on, and helping to re-envision locally focused advocacy, policy, and funding issues for libraries." *The Political Librarian* invites you to re-envision advocacy, policy, and funding, and we have some outstanding authors to help you get started.

This issue starts with three powerful editorials. John Chrastka, Executive Director of EveryLibrary, writes about possible changes to federal tax policy that will require library professionals to be innovative as they seek funding sources in the future. John articulates how changes in federal funding will likely force changes in local and state funding as well. Peter Bromberg, Every-Library Board Member and Executive Director of Salt Lake City Public Library, details the process that he and his team went through to secure a significant funding increase. Peter lays out a model that can be replicated by other libraries, regardless of their size or location. Emily Drabinski, Coordinator of Library Instruction for Long Island University--Brooklyn, tells the incredible story of being a union leader and organizer during protracted labor negotiations. Though Emily's experience is explicitly related to unions, her organizational techniques are useful to any advocacy campaign or negotiation.

This issue also includes two research articles and a thought-provoking think piece. I wrote an article with Mary Naylor, Assessment Librarian for Utah Valley University. Mary and I researched library professionals' experiences related to institutional social media accounts and politics. This exploratory study captures the political ambiguity in which many library professionals work and begs several questions for future research. Heather Braum, Ph.D. student at the School of Library and Information Science, University of South Carolina, details a fierce political battle and advocacy campaign that saved library systems across Kansas from possibly being defunded. She uses this backdrop to ask "What's next?" after a major advocacy campaign. Using a Scenarios Methodology, Heather imagines future scenarios that can help prepare Kansas library professionals, and library professionals everywhere, for future political possibilities. Finally, in our General Librarianship Spotlight, Adriana Parker, Associate Librarian at the University of Utah, explicates her process and success as an embedded, and highly-involved, librarian working with first-generation students.

Please contemplate how your professional life sits at the nexus of politics, advocacy, and tax policy and consider writing for *The Political Librarian*. Send your submissions, questions, or project ideas to: dustin.fife@everylibrary.org.

Trickle Down Economics:

Anticipating Significant Shifts in Local Political Climates for Library Taxes Following the 2017 Tax Reform Bill

John Chrastka

As a matter of tax policy, trickle down economics have been widely discredited by economists for over 30 years (Petroff, 2015). That has not stopped this Congress and the White House from envisioning (as of this writing) a singularly massive overhaul of the federal tax code that is rife with questionable supply-side policies that is likely to enshrine new inequities in American society for generations. Regardless of how you personally will be impacted by particular exemptions, deductions, reindexing or "trickles," a loss of nearly $150 billion dollars in revenue a year ($1.5 trillion dollars over ten years) will have a significant impact both in the near-term ability of the federal government to fund programs at all levels of government, and to also service debt over the long-term.

In the lead up to this December 2017 bill, there has been little exploration of the shockwave that this loss of revenue will have on local government. As directors and board members for tax supported institutions, it is important for library leaders to understand the impact that federal tax policy has on local revenue in order to anticipate the significant changes coming at all levels of government and the subsequent impact on library budgets. At the federal level, IMLS and IAL funding is included in the current Continuing Budget Resolution (through December 8, 2017) (Peet, 2017). There is every indication that these library programs are anticipated to be funded in the continuing FY 2018 federal budget.

Everything changes with the FY 2019 federal budget. Even with the possibility that automatic "Pay as You Go" sequestrations kick in for the final FY 2018 budget, there is already talk about Congress waiving the PAYGO sequester this year. However, FY 2019 will be authorized and appropriated under the new federal tax scheme. Programs and priorities in the federal budget will be subject not only to political negotiations, but the size of the budget will also be newly capped due to the significant diminishments in federal tax receipts that come into force under the new tax scheme. There will, simply put, be less money to fund programs and services. Programs and services that may be considered optional or 'nice but not necessary' will likely be the first casualties in this new scheme.

Already under the first Trump budget—and nested within the budget priorities of Speaker Ryan and other Congressional leaders—is the elimination of IMLS as a federally funded program. IMLS has had enough political support to be sustained in the current budget. What happens to this program when top-level spending is cut in the near-term? If we are facing a structural shortfall of between $100 billion and $150 billion dollars a year for the next ten years, what strategies do library leaders need to pursue now to ensure stable federal funding for libraries?

But a singular focus on IMLS funding does this industry a disservice. Within the 2017 tax bill (and as of this writing the final version has not yet come out of conference committee) there are three high-level, significant tax policy changes which need to be anticipated at the local and state levels. These are a cap on property tax deductions, the elimination of deductions for other state and local sales taxes (SALT), and upcoming cuts to federal grant programs and transfers to states. Each, taken alone, are not direct threats on the library funding formula. I would argue, however, that taken together, their combined impact on taxpayers will significantly alter the local tolerance for taxation across the country. All three of these policy developments directly impact the political climate in which local public library and school funding is decided.

When Local Deductions Disappear, Local Taxes Will Feel Higher

One conservative commentator in the *National Review* recently said that deducting "...SALT is the opiate of the overtaxed masses" (Murdock, 2017). State and local taxes, along with property taxes, have been part of the regular deductions on one's federal tax form since 1913. Multiple generations of tax filers have taken either the standard deduction or itemized their deductions to include SALT and property taxes. Uptake varies for itemized deductions, but between 20% and 30% of all filers use these deductions annually (Government Finance Officers Association, 2017). It is interesting to note that only 15% of filers in recent years itemized a charitable deduction. As of this writing, the House and the Senate versions

both propose nearly doubling the standard, or automatic deduction, while eliminating the itemized deductions.

Nearly 1/5th of filers regularly use itemized SALT and/or property deductions. While those filers may or may not experience an individual tax increase, my concern isn't for them in particular. It is for the local political climate in which new property or sales taxes for libraries must be introduced. In our experience at EveryLibrary, rural libraries and school districts commonly receive political pushback and hear opposition to new property taxes from large property-owning farmers. The argument is often framed as one of equity between landowners and households. While some states are more or less regressive than others around the methodology for assessing value or taxing parcels, the largest landowning stakeholders will be confronted with requests for new library funding at the time when they are adjusting to caps on their ability to deduct the costs of ownership from their own federal taxes (Davis et al., 2015). Likewise, in urban or suburban settings where equalized assessed value (EAV) or another system of determining value is in force, stakeholders with the largest personal or commercial holdings will also be capped.

Capping or eliminating property tax exemptions will create additional negative political pressure on municipal and district libraries, as well as school districts' library programs. The states that have been identified as the most at-risk for disruptions when SALT and property tax deductions are capped or eliminated are those with very robust libraries (Spector, 2017). Several of the states require voter approval for budget and bond changes. Every state in that list of SALT-heavy states has city councils, town boards, and county commissions who are sensitive to local voter and property owners' ability to pay existing local taxes, let alone new ones.

When Federal Funding Disappears, States and Localities Will Also Suffer

Local governments are funded most often by various types of taxes on property. Some local governments also use sales taxes and other fees. State government is funded in a variety of ways, either through taxes on income (personal and corporate), property taxes, or sales taxes, along with excise taxes, fees and licenses, and other charges, depending on the state. Some states do not level income tax. Others collect taxes on natural resource exploitation

in the form of severance. Still others tax 'use' rather than sales for major categories of consumption. But it is easy to forget when comparing state tax schemes that the single largest source of funding by type of revenue for each and every state comes in the form of "transfers" from the federal government.

In 2014, fully 31% of state government budgets were funded by transfers from the federal government (Tax Policy Center, 2017). Sales taxes only accounted for 23% of state revenues. In fact, corporate income taxes were only 2.6% of state revenue nationally. These transfers from the federal to various state governments come in the form of block grants for education and community development, funding for transportation and infrastructure, and health and human services programs, like Medicaid/Medicare, housing, and research. Regardless of projections for individuals or families, the real results of a smaller amount of federal income tax revenue on state government programs across all areas of society will be to shrink programs and services.

We have seen as much in libraries in the past. Even before threatened cuts to IMLS in the 2018 Trump budget, state library agencies (SLA) have faced significant cuts in their state-by-state budget allocations. Federal IMLS funding has been used to the maximum by creative, resourceful, and thoughtful Chief Officers to supplement state funding shortfalls (Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2017). Several SLAs rely on the provision for "maintenance of effort" by state legislatures to leverage federal money. Over time, as state budgets for SLAs were cut, IMLS funding became a larger and larger part of the funding formula. In some cases, as much as 50% of operating revenue for programs administered by a state library comes from IMLS funding (Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2017).

I have previously discussed what the implications would be for state libraries, as well as down-channel impact on local library services, if the Trump cuts were sustained (Chrastka, 2016). What I am extremely concerned about in light of the 2017 tax bill is that the situation of state agencies, relying on federal funding to supplement or underwrite their programs and services, is all too common across every sector of government (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2014). With the 2017 tax bill, the amount of federal revenue dedicated to state and local government

is about to change drastically. It is not an annual budget adjustment. It is a systemic change to how much money is available to run government. Our state and local governments are not in a position to weather this well. What will happen across state government—and by extension local governments—when the flow of federal funds is so drastically and permanently diminished?

Yes, New Taxes

Library leaders need to anticipate a major overhaul of each state's tax scheme in response to the 2017 tax bill. Currently, nearly all 41 states with an income tax have 'conformity' with the federal income tax code (Stauffer & Robyn, 2017). Following the 1986 Tax Reform Act, states were faced with needing to evaluate and potentially rework the scope and type of 'linkages' within their state income tax code that corresponded to the federal law. In any significant re-evaluation or re-working of basic revenue schemes, library leaders need to do more than simply monitor the situation. New policy proposals for funding library services need to be innovative and rooted in each state's own tax code.

As states explore their approach to conformity with the federal tax code, library leaders need to actively look for new sources of revenue to fund libraries beyond property or sales taxes. Twenty six states have Republican majorities serving in both houses of their state legislatures alongside Republican governors (Wilson, 2017). Thirty four in total have Republican governors (Leahy, 2017). It is important to recognize that many of the SALT deductions have been in the tax code since 1913. Will states that have Republican majorities have stronger linkages or weaker linkages to the federal code after the Republican-led 2017 reforms? It seems likely to me that the policy priorities of the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, and other anti-tax and anti-government think tanks, that influenced the development of the 2017 federal tax bill, will also influence the development of state tax schemes as well. While each reader could rightly contend that their state tax climate is different than any other, the reality is that a systematic approach by anti-government and anti-tax forces is about to sweep across the tax codes at all levels of government.

I would argue that the most prudent course of action is to engage with the upcoming reforms to state and local tax policy in full force. In general, there are 11 categories of

tax revenue available to states, including: Sales Tax, Taxes on Tobacco and Alcoholic Beverages, Insurance Fees, Fees on Public Utilities, Gaming and Pari-Mutuel, Personal Income Tax, Corporation Income Tax, Motor Fuel Tax, Motor Vehicle Registration Fees, State Property Tax, and Severance (mining, natural resource exploitation) Taxes or Fees (Perez, 2008). As a community, library leaders need to evaluate where new sources of revenue can come from that supplements the current approach to local library funding. Is there a new opportunity in your state within the existing tax for library funding? Whether it is integrating libraries into new or existing 'sin taxes', like gambling or marijuana, or devising entirely new categories of revenue from taxes, fees, or surcharges that include the library, it is incumbent upon us to advance our own policy agenda.

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About the Author

EveryLibrary's founder is John Chrastka, a long-time library trustee, supporter, and advocate. Mr. Chrastka is a former partner in AssociaDirect, a Chicago-based consultancy focused on supporting associations in membership recruitment, conference, and governance activities. He is a former president and member of the Board of Trustees for the Berwyn (IL) Public Library (2006–2015) and is a former president of the Reaching Across Illinois Libraries System (RAILS) multi-type library system. Prior to his work at AssociaDirect, he was Director for Membership Development at the American Library Association (ALA). He is a member of ALA as well as the Illinois Library Association (ILA), and the American Political Sciences Association (APSA). He as named a 2014 Mover & Shaker by *Library Journal* and tweets @mrchrastka.

Building Support for your Library Budget:
A Recipe for Success

Peter Bromberg

My experience reinforced for me a simple but powerful truth: successful campaigns are a team sport. The participation, support, creativity, knowledge, connections, and even dissenting perspectives of so many people greatly enriched the quality and intelligence of our overall approach.

On September 12, 2016, I became the executive director of the Salt Lake City Public Library (SLCPL). One of the most immediate things I needed to address was planning for the FY18 budget. My recommended budget would need to be ready for the library board to consider in February 2017, so they could vote on it in March and we could present to the city council in April. As a member of the EveryLibrary Board, I had been involved directly and indirectly in helping libraries and citizen ballot committees mount campaigns to build support for budget-related ballot initiatives. While I did not need to bring the SLCPL budget before voters, I realized that I could use many of the EveryLibrary strategies and tactics to help build community awareness and support for my proposed budget, which would need to be approved by the city council and the mayor.

My plan to successfully build support for the budget included the following ingredients:

1. **Diagnose the need**: Develop my own understanding of what funding was needed.
2. **Learn the political landscape and build relationships**: Develop an understanding of the official budget process as well as an understanding of the who had power and influence in the process, both formally and informally.
3. **Determine what's possible**: In light of the true need and the political landscape, what budget request could I actually get passed by the board, the council, and the mayor?
4. **Develop and deliver effective messaging for a variety of audiences through multiple channels**.
5. **Activate a network of support.**

My first goal was to accurately diagnose the bright spots (what's working well), hot spots (what can work better), and gaps (what's missing) in terms of library health and operations, and then identify the corresponding budget implications. I had studied SLCPL budgets from previous years as part of my interview preparations, so I had already identified facilities maintenance funding as a hot spot. Salt Lake City Public Library had recently opened two new branches and had a two hundred forty thousand square foot flagship location downtown that was built in 2003, as well as five other branches, including a ninety-nine year old Carnegie building and an eighty-nine year old branch. All locations had long-standing maintenance issues; however, I did not see sufficient funds in the budget for long term care of these facilities.

A significant gap in the budget, already known to the board, the mayor, and the council, was the lack of funding for the operations of the two new branches. When the branches were built, the library had enough savings to operate them for a year or two, with the agreement and understanding with city council that we would need to seek a budget increase for operational funds.

Finally, I learned that our salaries and benefits were a hotspot for staff. This was evident not only from the budget, but from the results of an annual independently administered staff engagement survey that clearly showed a high level of dissatisfaction with pay and benefits. The level of dissatisfaction was low in comparison with other measures of satisfaction across the organization, but also low in comparison to peer institutions across the country that had also participated in the survey. Most notably, our health benefits coverage for couples and families was significantly below market and acted as a barrier to employment and retention for anyone needing non-single health coverage.

After diagnosing the need, I began engaging in the next phases of the plan, which largely entailed setting up meetings with library board members, as well as city council members, key members of council and the mayor's staff, and community leaders. These meetings often served the multiple purposes of learning the political landscape, building relationships, sussing out how much of a budget increase I could reasonably ask for, and beginning to test and evaluate messaging.

In early conversations with library board members who

sat on the finance committee, I learned that the library system had not had a tax increase since 2004, and that the library tax rate had been consistently falling, having dropped from .000846 in tax year 2012 to .000700 in tax year 2016. I also learned that, politically, the culture and practice was to take "one big bite of the apple" in proposing any budget that would lead to a tax increase, and then not seek any increases for many years to come. Given the "one bite of the apple" culture and the significant funding that was needed for facilities maintenance alone, it was decided to go big and ask for a nearly $4 million dollar increase, amounting to a nearly 24% increase in our total budget.

While we all believed that a request of this magnitude was warranted and defensible, it could still be perceived as—in the words of one long-serving city council staffer—"audacious." In looking for ways to strategically build support for the increase, one board member suggested that we create a special "designated capital fund" for funds intended for long-term maintenance of facilities and technology. Previously, the City of Salt Lake had raised taxes for the purposes of fixing roads and then used the money for other purposes. We determined that if we created a "designated capital fund" that was protected by a policy that effectively limited our use of the funds to intended purposes, it would help convey our sincere commitment to the long term stewardship of community assets, and make any increase more palatable. Thus we decided to structure the budget request such that $1.5 million dollars were designated for long-term capital maintenance, with another $1.5 million designated for operations of our two newest branches.

During my initial conversations with the board finance committee and other board members, I also started planting seeds and workshopping messaging regarding the elimination of late fines. I quickly found that board members resonated with the message that late fees were inconsistent with our core value of access, as they created an inequitable barrier of service that disproportionately impacted our lower income patrons. My goal was to suss out possible support for the elimination of fines and, if the support was there, to eliminate the revenue from our proposed budget and include language supportive of eliminating barriers to access in our official budget priorities document. As the board expressed strong support for the elimination of fines, I included the idea in my

draft talking points for conversations with city council members.

Coming out of a series of meetings with the board finance committee, it was clear that we would be making a historically large request for a budget increase, and that this request would be driven by funding for 1) our two new branches 2) long term maintenance of facilities and technology, and 3) addressing deficiencies in staff pay and benefits. With the scope of the request and key priorities identified, I, along with my board president, began meeting with city council members. The city council would ultimately have to pass the library budget. As this was the first budget in 14 years that would require a tax increase, it was imperative that I understood their concerns and priorities and built strong support before officially presenting the budget in April. My goal in these meetings, therefore, was to build personal relationships with council members and begin testing out and refining our messaging to see what resonated.

I can't overstate the value of having these face-to-face meetings. Not only was I able to create valuable personal relationships and learn a great deal about what was important to each council member, I found that they were appreciative of my effort to give them an early heads up on the direction of the budget and that they were happy and willing to offer useful feedback about how to structure my messaging. In the spirit of Inspector Columbo, at the end of these meetings I would say, "there's just one more thing..." and share my rationale for eliminating late fines. Happily, I discovered that there was strong support among council members. After each meeting, I would debrief with my board president. We would reflect on what messaging seemed to resonate, what didn't, and we would make notes and revisions to our talking points. This practice of reflection and revision is absolutely key to developing an effective message. After nine meetings with city council members, and a number of other meetings with council and the mayor's staff, we had developed a pretty robust and effective message around the budget request. Another benefit of this approach was that through sheer repetition I had learned not just the messaging, but the nuances of delivering the message effectively: the pauses, the vocal variety, the laugh lines, etc. Indeed, I felt like a comedian trying out new material for months on the road in preparation for the big HBO special. So when it was time to appear before two edi-

torial boards and in front of more than 20 community groups, I was ready.

My next step was to draft a final budget request that effectively blended input from the library board finance committee, city council members, council and mayoral office staff, and, of course, the library management team. The final budget was passed by the library board with unanimous support. When I presented the official budget to the city council, they surprised me by expressing strong support for going fine-free, and requesting that the board pass a fine-free policy prior to the council taking its official vote on the budget in June. My "planting some seeds" about the idea of going fine-free took root more quickly than I had hoped! Over the next few weeks, I synthesized much of the research I had been conducting and drafted a recommendation for the library board that passed with no objections.

I now had two months before the city council would vote on our budget. A number of city council members had explicitly or implicitly stated support for the budget, and advised me to "make it easy for them" to vote yes by activating vocal support in the community. To that end, I identified the following strategies:

1. Present to the editorial boards of *The Salt Lake Tribune* and *Deseret News*, the state's two largest newspapers.
2. Present to 15-20 local community councils and other community groups.
3. Post an FAQ budget page to answer questions and provide a deep dive into the budget.
4. Develop and distribute well-designed marketing collateral with key talking points, links to the budget FAQ, my contact information, and information about upcoming budget hearings.
5. Activate former library board members and friends to support the budget.

Over the next two months, I presented to local "community councils," which are nonprofit quasi-governmental bodies that represent the interests of more than 20 neighborhoods. On nights when two or more community council groups were meeting simultaneously, my board president or a senior member of the library leadership team would offer a presentation on one side of the city while I presented across town. At these meetings, I would have 5-20 minutes to present some well-refined

talking points, answer questions, and distribute our information-only collateral that reinforced the three main drivers of the budget request. The public response at these presentations was universally positive, and they were often attended by city council members, who could see first-hand that there was strong support for the budget increase from our most civically-engaged residents.

In addition to our website FAQ, community presentations, and marketing collateral, I set up meetings with the editorial boards of the two local papers, *The Salt Lake Tribune* and *Deseret News*. Strategically, I considered whether it was wise to speak with the *Deseret News* editorial board, as they were much more fiscally conservative and I did not anticipate a favorable editorial. However, I put great importance on the value of transparency, and also believed that even if the discussion with the *Deseret News* editorial board did not yield a positive endorsement of our budget, it would demonstrate open and responsible management and stewardship of public funds. In the end the *Tribune* did offer an endorsement of the budget, while the *Deseret News* was less supportive. But I believe the demonstration of transparency created positive good will and helped to bolster the overall reputation of the library which had suffered from some negative press in the past.

Finally, leading up to the city council budget vote in June, our board reached out to former board members to solicit letters, phone calls, and emails in support of the budget. Likewise, the leadership of our friends group activated the friends. The city council held three budget hearings, as well as a state-mandated "Truth in Taxation" hearing. Library supporters spoke in favor of the budget at every hearing, while no one spoke against it. In June 2017, the city council voted unanimously to approve our budget and the mayor signed off to make it official soon after. One council member told me that the council had received more comments about the library budget than about any other item—and that all comments were in favor. Another council member observed that the library's approach to the budget had become "professionalized," and had gone from "good to great." A third council member, referring to our approach to inform the community about the budget, simply offered, "Now that is how it's done."

My experience in shepherding the SLCPL budget to

approval taught me that a few basic strategies, thoughtfully and systematically employed, lead to success. My mantra through the process was, "Develop the plan, then work the plan." I also learned the great value in continual reflection and iteration. At every step of the way I took time to reflect on what was working, what was not working, and modified my messaging and approach. It was particularly useful to engage in reflective conversation with board members and my colleagues in library administration, and journal insights and thoughts daily. Finally, my experience reinforced for me a simple but powerful truth: successful campaigns are a team sport. The participation, support, creativity, knowledge, connections, and even dissenting perspectives of so many people greatly enriched the quality and intelligence of our overall approach. Truly, the success of the campaign was directly proportional to the number of people who were invited to be true participants and partners in the endeavor.

About the Author

Peter Bromberg has served on the EveryLibrary Board of Directors since 2014. As executive director of the Salt Lake City Public Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, he recently had success in passing a 23.3% budget increase while also eliminating all late fees. Over his 25 year career, Peter has held numerous leadership roles in state and national associations, including helping to create and launch ALA's Emerging Leaders program, and co-creating and delivering a statewide leadership institute for the Oklahoma Library Association. He can be found at peterbromberg.com or peter.bromberg@everylibrary.org.

An Organizer's Tale:

LIU Brooklyn's Lockout and Union Contract Negotiation

Emily Drabinski

Before coming to organizing work, I think I would have said that we move people by explaining our position, by helping others understand why they should come with us. Now I understand that we move people by listening, by connecting political work to what matters to them, by demonstrating that they will be better off if they cast their lot with us.

I am a faculty librarian and a member of the faculty union at LIU Brooklyn. We are the Long Island University Faculty Federation, the first and one of the only private higher education faculty unions in the country. Ours is a union with a long history of agitation and collective action that has sought and secured powerful workplace protections for its membership. Since the 1970s, the union has organized, fought, and achieved things that would have been impossible if individuals had been asking for them alone. These include establishing tenure, maintaining administrative contributions to healthcare, and, for librarians, a workload and compensation package that comes as close to matching that of classroom faculty as any I've seen in the country. Decades of incremental organizing and struggle have made those things possible.

Our most recent contract ran from 2011 to 2016, a five year contract that was ratified after a multi-day faculty strike to protest historically small salary increases and cuts to healthcare. During that time, the university acquired a new president of the board of trustees and a new university president. This new administration entered contract negotiations with priorities that some of you may recognize from your own institutions, an interest in transferring power from faculty to a growing central administration that sought to "run the university like a business," with preference for efficiency and productivity. They wanted the Moody's credit rating of the university to improve, and that rating usually gets better when unions are weak. Unionized workers must be bargained with and, as a rule, cost more than non-union employees. We had seen the other unions at our university get dismantled by the administration one by one: clerical staff had failed to negotiate a contract and were working under an imposition; the janitorial services union had been broken and those jobs outsourced to a company that paid lower wages and provided worse benefits. We knew we were heading into a difficult round of negotiations. They proved to be even more difficult than we expected.

The union's interests in negotiations were several, but a primary motivator of our bargaining position was a desire to secure salaries for full-time faculty at the Brooklyn campus that matched the wages at the Long Island campus. As we prepared for negotiations, we discovered that Long Island faculty made 20% more than we were making in Brooklyn. We did not feel this was fair. We wanted salary parity for full-time faculty in Brooklyn. Our union also includes part-time faculty, and we wanted to maintain and increase the gains we had won for that group in terms of salaries and contributions to healthcare coverage, while preserving workload. Like most universities, we run primarily on part-time labor. Nationwide, more than 70% of courses in higher education are taught by part-timers who earn less than full-time faculty and often have zero job security (AAUP, para. 4). We wanted to maintain and improve working conditions for the half of our unit that lived and worked in precarity.

This was the stage that was set for us as we neared the end of contract negotiations in August 2016. We knew it was going to be an adversarial bargaining season—and it was. Administration agreed to move toward pay parity for full-time faculty, but wanted to pay for that out of draconian cuts to part-time pay. They would not move. Neither would we. As negotiations ground toward a stalemate, the faculty prepared to give ourselves the option to go on strike. As a private university, our unions are not bound by the Taylor Law, a statute in New York State that prevents public workers from going on strike. At the end of the day, the strike is what gives the union the most power: we can withhold our labor, the labor necessary for management to make a profit. Such an action has time and again compelled capital to negotiate. They need the workers to go to work, as much at a university as at an auto plant. Striking was an action we were prepared to take. As it turned out, we would not have a chance to make this hard decision to put our careers and the lives of our students on hold and at risk. At the end of negotiations, we were locked out by university administration.

When I heard the news I had to Google it. A lockout is

something like a management strike, except rather than the workers withholding their labor, management withholds everything else: access to the workplace, wages, and benefits. On September 2nd, 2016, at the end of contract negotiations where administration had failed to accede to any union demands, my pay was stopped, my health insurance taken away, and I was shut out of my email and all online course sites. The university hired extra security to make sure I could not enter the campus or my office. I was fired, and so was every single member of the LIU Brooklyn faculty. We were locked out because we wanted a better deal, a fair shake, something we felt entitled to and largely had the power to push for because we had a union. Our union offered us a structure through which to organize ourselves, and a structure for negotiations with our administration.

Exhortations to *organize! resist! stand strong! fight back!* were loud in those days after management fired us en masse. We continue to hear them in the wake of the 2016 presidential election, following every mass shooting, every disclosure of sexual harassment and assault. The lockout taught those of us who had to fight to get back to work what those exhortations mean in real terms. Organizing is exhilarating, tedious, exhausting, thrilling, simple, and complicated. We all had to learn fast, and still have more learning to do. We learned three critical lessons that have changed the way I think about organizing for power in contexts from presidential politics to the most minor of workplace struggles over fax machines and copy paper.

A few practical steps are necessary for organized resistance. First, find out who is on your side and where they stand on what matters to you. We learned very quickly that we could not be successful except when we had mobilized numbers that could undermine the advantages held by management at the bargaining table. They had more money than we did, more access to communication tools, and the capacity to make the membership very, very afraid and, in turn, very, very compliant. We had to know that enough of us would gather for a rally or protest to be perceived as a threat by management. Organizing is, at its root, about making and keeping lists. We had lists of our members, lists of the events they had attended and events they had skipped. We had their phone numbers so that we could call and keep them in the loop, as well as to encourage them to call each other. We knew from our lists that there were more of us than there were of them,

and we kept track of our capacity to mobilize each other for the actions in the days and weeks and months that followed the lockout.

Second, find out who your leaders are. Leaders aren't necessarily department chairs or people with seniority. Leaders are people who other people follow. Building power is about assembling a mass of people who can push toward a particular outcome, whether that means a negotiated contract, library funding, gun control legislation, or a presidential election. Lists of people are critical, but so are the individuals who can reliably deliver these groups to events, polls, and phone banks. For us, we needed to find the leaders in every academic school and division. We needed the leaders in nursing to call nursing faculty to the rally, and library leaders to bring the librarians to the front. Identifying leaders means identifying key sources of power essential to making people show up.

Third, talk to each other; and talk and talk and talk. We talked to each other to develop a shared analysis of what was happening to us. We talked to each other to find out what mattered to each of us. We talked to each other to discover what each of us was willing to do and how far we were willing to go to secure a better contract for everyone in the unit. Sometimes these conversations were inspiring and sometimes they were disheartening, but they were critical to helping us understand how much power we had built with each other and what kind of resistance we were prepared to mount. Before coming to organizing work, I think I would have said that we move people by explaining our position, by helping others understand why they should come with us. Now I understand that we move people by listening, by connecting political work to what matters to them, by demonstrating that they will be better off if they cast their lot with us. This means urgent listening rather than urgent speaking, always with an eye toward understanding where people are and what it would take to move them to fight back harder.

After twelve days, we got back in. We had an extended contract that carried us through the end of May and we continued to bargain. Management continued to push back. In the end, we got a signed contract that takes us through 2021. We won some things: parity payments for Brooklyn's full-time faculty so that we will make the same rank minimum as our counterparts at the Long Island campus. We won a contract that includes binding

arbitration, a requirement that management collect dues or an equivalent fee from all unit members to fund union activity, and a guaranteed return to the bargaining table. When our contract expires, we will bargain again. Had we worked under an imposed contract, management would not have a contractual obligation to bargain with us again. Of the five unions we have on our campus right now, we are the only union that has those three guarantees, the linchpins in that union structure. Without those things, I believe, you do not have a union at all.

But we also had some losses. We signed a contract that includes concessions, which means we gave power back to management. Most of these losses hit our contingent workers the hardest. Those least able to absorb the blows of reduced pay and workload took the biggest hit. And now we're left with the bones of a union—its structure—and we must build it back up again.

Here's what I learned from this experience, our one big success—we are the only unit on campus with a negotiated contract. Our big failure—the livelihood of much of our casual labor force has been devastated. Management is highly organized. They were single-minded in their efforts to control us. They have more money than us and more power than us, but we outnumber them. In order to push against forces that have more power than us, we have to organize each other. We have to all be together, working consistently in a forward direction over time. We were not organized enough to force management to offer us a contract without concessions. We cannot let that happen again. When we look at the world as it is right now, there is so much we cannot let happen ever again. We all have so much to stand against, to fight for, to resist, and to organize to change for good.

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Libraries, Social Media, and Politics:

Do Library Professionals Post about Politics on Institutional Social Media Accounts?

Dustin Fife & Mary Naylor Stephens

Introduction

Social media tools are used for different purposes among libraries and library professionals, with nearly all engaging in some form of social media. Some libraries have intricate policies that determine what is and is not posted on their institutional accounts and others do not know who all have the passwords. Some institutions post multiple times a day across multiple platforms, while others are constantly changing whose job it is to manage social media accounts. How libraries use social media is a broad topic that deserves, and has been receiving, nuanced research from many directions. This paper focuses on one aspect of social media use, namely, do library professionals post about outwardly political topics, events, laws, and policies on their institutional accounts? This paper attempts to uncover the experiences of library professionals related to politics and social media posting. This exploratory study, as so many exploratory studies do, creates as many questions for future research as it answers.

Methodology

In order to gather information, the authors distributed a simple Qualtrics survey to library professionals via national social media groups and listservs. The survey was open for seven days, and was advertised several times throughout the week. The survey consisted of twenty-four questions; twenty-two were multiple choice and two open-ended. The survey received 458 responses from all across the United States, with 351 responding to all twenty-four questions. The survey did not seek identifying information, but did ask a few demographic or personal questions, such as age and education level, and a few questions about personal social media habits for comparison to institutional use. Since this research did not seek comprehensive identifying demographic information, the survey has not controlled for over or under-representation in any areas of our profession or society. Also, since the survey was distributed using social media, the self-selected respondents represent a group of library professionals obviously engaged in social media, though the survey was distributed through several email listservs as well.

Literature

Finding literature that specifically discusses librarians using social media for their institutions in a political way yielded few results. However, library professionals, as well as their institutions, have concerns regarding social media and posting that are worthy of note. Many of these concerns revolve around who is allowed to post, what they post, and whether or not there is an official policy.

Effectively using social media platforms was a significant topic for a number of articles and audiences. Social media management has become an explicit job duty for many library professionals, as Phillips (2015) states, "for many of the surveyed librarians (85%), updating the library's social media profiles was one of their official responsibilities...indicating the high value these librarians place not only on the development and maintenance of online profiles but also on the responsibility of librarians to be involved in this process" (p. 189). She also found that a majority "indicated that more than one library employee contributes to his or her library's Facebook profile" (p. 189). No matter the various workflows for the social media content and posts "the social media presence of the library has become a vital, and sometimes shared, aspect of library work" (p 189). Cotter and Sasso (2016), also found that the responsibility of the library's social media presence was frequently shared, at least in part; respondents indicated that groups of individuals were often involved in creating the content for posts, even if only one individual was authorized to actually submit the posts (p. 79).

A number of researchers have discussed how to develop an appropriate social media presence (Watson, 2017 & Ramsey, Ramsey & Vecchione, 2014). There was consideration given to what would maintain a "suitable image of the library" (Phillips, 2015, p.190). These branding and image concerns were not always specifically guided by formal or institutional policies, but as Phillips (2015) stated, "the influence of these institutional policies can be felt" (p. 190). Cotter and Sasso (2016) wrote, "Approximately two-thirds of the 230 respondents indicated that

content posted by library staff to library social media pages did not require approval; however, in the comments, they noted strategies that their library employed to ensure the appropriateness of social media postings as well as the practice of monitoring the content of replies to posts" (p. 79).

When Cotter and Sasso (2016) asked their survey respondents if the library had an official or unofficial social media policy, nearly 66% of participants indicated they did (p. 78-79). Others have found lower numbers of libraries with official policies. Phillips (2015) wrote, "Additionally, fewer than half (44%) of the librarians surveyed worked in libraries with an official social media policy" (p. 190). DiScala and Weeks (2013) took the question a step further and asked questions about how different librarians interpreted policies based on how formally their school's rules or policies were presented (p. 8). They found that, "In the most explicit and formal presentation of policy, the four school librarians perceived the policy in the same way: understanding that it required strict adherence. However, as the school district presented policies less clearly, the responses by the librarians began to differ" (p 8).

Outside of direct policies governing social media, library professionals are concerned with what political role libraries play in a democratic society. Childs (2017) states, "The most important finding of my research is that libraries are not neutral institutions and librarians are not neutral actors" (p. 65). Childs continues that because of both internal and external pressures libraries face while serving the public and because they subscribe to "lofty democratic ideals" they must "protect intellectual freedom by embracing their political agency and actively combating censorship and surveillance" (p. 65). As Childs sees it, libraries are not on neutral ground, and will lose their ability to meet their goals, and uphold their ethical ideals without engaging with politics and communities directly.

This paper sits at the nexus of these topics. Specifically, do library professionals have a policy to follow and does it describe what oversight measures exist for social media? With or without policies in place, are library professionals taking the opportunity to be political about topics that support our professional values on social media platforms, or do their institutions view that as beyond the appropriate scope of social media use?

Results

Though little demographic information was sought, the survey sought several points of information so that the group of respondents as a whole could be discussed. This research focused more on the general experience of library professionals than any group in particular. The responses to this survey came from library professionals working in all types of libraries; however, public libraries were most heavily represented. 61.79% of respondents work in public libraries, 24.89% in academic, 6.11% in school, 2.4% in special, 0.66% in archives, and 4.15% in other. Some of those who selected other described their workplaces as state agencies, consortia, prisons, military facilities, independent consultancies, for-profit companies, and several others. The research does not look at these groups individually, though it is important to remember that interactions between social media and politics may be very different depending on what type of library the respondents work in.

The survey also collected information about age, degree level, and job type to better understand the group of respondents. There was an even distribution in age. 17.03% were aged 21-30, 35.37% were aged 31-40, 26.64% were aged 41-50, 14.19% were aged 51-60, and 6.77% were aged 61 and over. Age can be a mitigating factor in any discussion of technology, but for the purposes of this research, the age of people was not as important as their awareness of existing policy and procedure and whether or not they directly control social media platforms for their institution. 77.73% of respondents said that they have a library degree (MLS, MLIS, MSIS, etc.), while 22.27% did not. 51.64% of respondents supervise staff in some sort of capacity and 65.26% of respondents have direct access in some nature to their institutions' social media platforms. So, this group works in all types of libraries, though it is dominated by public library professionals. There is a more representative age distribution and most respondents have a library degree. The majority of respondents supervise staff generally and personally have direct access to their institutions social media platforms.

It is important to have at least a perfunctory knowledge of library professionals' personal habits to compare to institutional habits. 59.47% of respondents use social media multiple times a day; another 33.41% use social

media daily. Only 0.45% claimed to never use social media. So, overall, library professionals regularly use social media in their personal lives. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest were the platforms used most by respondents. However, many other platforms were mentioned, including Snapchat, Linkedin, Goodreads, Reddit, Tumblr and others. Lastly, we wanted to know how often library professionals thought that they posted about overtly political topics on their personal social media accounts. 27.68% answered that they never personally post about politics, 30.36% said monthly, 29.46% said weekly, 10.49% said daily, and 2.01% said multiple times a day. From that, we see that over 72% of library professionals responding to this survey use social media to personally post about politics. It is important to note that the survey did not define "politics" or "political posts" for respondents, but relied on each respondent to interpret these terms.

Institutional accounts for libraries are, for the most part, used actively. 17.08% of represented institutions post to social media multiple times a day. 42.37% post daily, and 33.03% post at least weekly. Libraries overwhelmingly use Facebook (445 of 458), Twitter (259 of 458), and Instagram (277 of 458), though everything from Pinterest to Google+ was mentioned as well. Concerning policies that guide social media posting, 38.05% of respondents said that their libraries have policies in place and that they are followed. Another 4.39% said that their libraries have policies, but that they are mostly ignored, and 39.27% of people said that there are no policies, but that there are unwritten rules that staff tend to follow. Finally, 18.29% of respondents simply said that there are no policies that guide social media activity.

Many of the remaining questions gave respondents situations and asked if they would be allowed to post on social media in those situations. Throughout the responses there was consistent ambiguity about what library professionals were allowed to do. For example, the survey asked, "Does your institution specifically bar you from posting about political matters/movements/ideas on the institution's social media accounts?" 25.31% responded "yes," 37.10% responded "no," and a slight plurality of 37.59% responded "maybe." Some of the respondents mentioned that they, "Can't support our own library measures, but we can write about other local, state, and federal issues, and do;" "It's not specifically barred, but it's clear it's not a space for political messages;" "We are

county employees and [are] barred from even discussing politics;" and finally, "We can post some information on sources but no commentary."

Other questions gave even more specific scenarios. Question 14 asked, "Does your library allow you to post on the institutional account about official local/state/national political events such as caucuses, voter registrations drives, or political debates?" 30.81% of respondents said "yes," 28.20% said "no," and 40.99% said "maybe." Some of the maybes explained, "We cannot be partisan;" "Only if county sponsored;" "If our take is nonpartisan, yes;" and many, many others. Question 15 was similar, asking, "Does your library allow you to post on the institutional account about non-official local/state/national political events such as political protests?" Only 7.58% responded "yes," while 45.77% were able to respond "no." This still left 46.65% responding "maybe," and commenting with things such as, "No official rule, but it's not done;" "Nothing said outright, but imagine that doing so would be problematic;" "Depends on viewpoint;" and "Nothing partisan." A pattern with many responding "maybe" emerges early in these questions leaning towards not posting political information except in limited circumstances and remains throughout. It is a pattern of caution and some might even say fear.

Question 16 asked, "Does your library allow you to post on the institutional account about official local/state/federal legislation, executive policies, or court decisions?" 14.91% said "yes", 33.92% said "no", and 51.17% said "maybe". Question 17 asked, "Does your library allow you to post on the institutional account about a federal issue such as IMLS funding?" 30.29% said "yes," 26.18% said "no," and 43.53% said "maybe." Question 18 asked, "Does your library allow you to post on the institutional account about a state issue such as a state law that impacts school librarians?" 21.11% answered "yes," 27.86% answered "no," and 51.03% answered "maybe." Question 19 asked, "Does your library allow you to post on the institutional account about a local issue such as an upcoming ballot initiative for library funding?" 26.98% answered "yes," 29.91% answered "no," and 43.11% answered "maybe." Question 20 asked, "Does your library allow you to post on the institutional account about a social movement such as the Tea Party movement or Black Lives Matter?" 8.50% said "yes," 48.39% said "no," and 43.11% said "maybe." Throughout all of these questions,

the "maybes" often added comments such as, "Depends on viewpoint;" "I don't think so;" "Informational purposes only;" "Never mentioned, but would imagine it would be an issue" and "This might be discouraged." While many people responded "maybe," most of the explanations are less ambiguous as the respondents repeatedly leaned towards limiting political discussion.

Questions 21 and 22 were slightly different, asking, "Has your library ever removed a seemingly political post from the institutional account?" and "Are you aware of any employees in your institution who lost the right to post to social media because of past political posts?" Both of these were overwhelmingly "no" with 68.44% and 82.99% respectively.

Questions 23 and 24 were open-ended questions. Question 23 asked, "Give an example of a political event, issue, idea you have posted about in the past on your institution's social media?" There are numerous responses here, and many mentioned earlier restrictions to keep a nonpartisan tone. Examples included net neutrality, IMLS funding, library funding, a "Black Lives Matter protest in front of the library," and also "only informational posts such as election day details, etc. very neutral in tone." Question 24 shows that many libraries do not feel comfortable posting about things that other libraries already have posted about. It asked, "Give an example of a political event, issue, idea you have chosen NOT to post about on your institution's social media, even though you wanted to?" Responses included repeated references to IMLS funding, Black Lives Matter, "Pretty much everything," and local politics.

Conclusions

There is so much research that can be done concerning social media, politics, and libraries. More research can be done actually comparing policies and their enactment and efficacy. More research needs to be done around what is legally permissible for libraries and social media under local and state law. More research needs to be done about how employees feel in a role that can often be uncertain. As we add to the literature surrounding social media, politics, and libraries, library professionals will be empowered to use these tools more aptly and comfortably.

Throughout the responses, the most popular answer was

"maybe." Though this might seem to show that each situation is judged by the merit of the possible political post, the comments that came with those "maybes" would generally lean towards not posting political content, whether it be local, state, or national politics. The more official an event, such as voter registration or political caucuses, the more likely a library professional was to feel comfortable posting about it. However, this was not universal and many library professionals do not feel comfortable ever mentioning political information on institutional accounts.

This survey did not ask for social media policies to compare, but focused on the experiences and recollections of individual library professionals, so direct policy suggestions would not necessarily be obvious from this content. However, it is clear that library professionals need more guidance and training to ensure that they can fulfill the goals of their institutions when using social media. Social media is a powerful set of tools being used without the certainty necessary to regularly post political content that advocates for libraries. Leadership teams need to give clear guidance to library professionals because social media management will continue to be a job duty at almost every library. Leadership should define what it means to be political for their institution and push the boundaries of politics on social media for issues important to librarianship.

Full results for the survey can be found here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1B4s01fXN-kwqsO57ZWmP2OYx-Acp1QUE7/view?usp=sharing

For any other questions please contact dfife@western.edu or mary.naylor@uvu.edu.

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What's Next After a Library Community's Legislative Advocacy Campaign?

Three Scenarios from the Kansas Library Community

Heather A. Braum

Abstract

Almost all public library funding in the United States is controlled by local, state, and/or federal budgets, policies, and laws. Influencing budgets, policies, and laws happens through lobbying and advocacy campaigns. When significant changes or cuts to library funding are proposed, how do stakeholders respond and what is the potential outcome of advocacy efforts? As (fictional) President Josiah Bartlett asked again and again throughout the TV Series The West Wing, "What's next?" (Sorkin, 1999). This study explores the question of "what comes next" by crafting three theoretical scenarios for the Kansas library community set in 2030, based on Kansas library history, lessons from other states, and the numerous advocacy messages posted to social media and submitted testimony against HB 2719.

Keywords: *library advocacy, budgets, future of libraries, Kansas libraries, public library funding, legislative advocacy, social media advocacy, regional library systems*

Almost all public library funding in the United States is controlled by local, state, and/or federal budgets, policies, and laws. Influencing budgets, policies, and laws happens through lobbying and advocacy campaigns. When significant changes or cuts to library funding are proposed, how do stakeholders respond and what is the potential outcome of advocacy efforts? As (fictional) President Josiah Bartlett asked again and again throughout the TV Series The West Wing, "What's next?" (Sorkin, 1999).

The Kansas library community faced such a situation when House Bill 2719 (HB 2719) was introduced on March 8, 2016 and a hearing was scheduled for March 14. On March 9, the Kansas Library Association was alerted to the bill's existence and its library-funding-related content (Warburton, 2016). As *Library Journal* reported:

> Kansas library professionals, forced to mobilize quickly and using social media to rally support and spread their message, convinced lawmakers to remove language from a fast-tracked tax bill that they said threatened the survival of the state's seven regional systems and, in turn, promised a trickle-down reduction in services for public libraries. (Warburton, 2016)

But what happens next? What comes next after a groundswell of advocacy efforts and public support? In the Kansas case, the library-related portions of the bill were eventually amended. But what happens if, in spite of advocacy efforts, budgets are cut or eliminated or funding structures and authority are changed? Total advocacy wins do not always happen; partial wins/defeats and even total defeats are more common. Libraries usually continue on, even in drastically changed environments. What comes out of those advocacy efforts?

This study will explore that question of "what comes next" by crafting three theoretically scenarios for the Kansas library community set in 2030, based on Kansas library history, lessons from other states, and the numerous advocacy messages posted to social media and submitted testimony against HB 2719.

Literature Review

Jaeger et al. (2014) describe an approach for libraries to advocate to political leaders, providing a 14-step-approach that includes focusing on expanding who advocates for the library and empowering those voices, exploring and utilizing new forms of technology in advocacy efforts and crafting better advocacy messages (p. 120-123). Nelson (2006) considered the dual role of marketing and advocacy to build support for public libraries. McClure et al. (2006) discussed the importance of networking in local political systems. Additionally, at least two major studies have looked at the state of library funding and public attitudes towards libraries (Public Agenda, 2006; De Rosa & Johnson, 2008) and the Pew Research Center has published numerous studies on libraries from 2005-2017, including studies on Americans' attitudes toward public libraries.

But what comes after an advocacy initiative or advocacy efforts? Many New York public libraries have gone through public referendums to change their funding structures. Andersen (2003) examined lessons learned from New York public library directors who had gone through these referendums to change the library's budget from being a line in the city budget to becoming a special taxing district. These lessons were framed around an additional library (Albany) going through its own

successful referendum in 2002. The scenarios I suggest will explore what could follow advocacy efforts.

Background

Kansas public libraries' history traces back to the territorial days when "slave-owning Missourians and 'book-loving New Englanders' rushed to stake land claims in the former Indian territory" (Gardiner, 1982, p. 1). The basis of the State Library of Kansas was founded through a Territorial Library in 1855; several local public libraries claim to be the longest continuous uninterrupted library service.

In 1965, the Kansas Legislature passed legislation that permitted the organization of regional library systems, K.S.A. 75-2547 and 75-2548. These systems were established to support local public libraries, and "the primary goals were, and remain, the improvement of existing library services and programs and the extension of library service to areas where it was previously unavailable" (State Library of Kansas, n.d., Regional Library Systems).

Today, regional systems continue to support local libraries, and almost all Kansans have access to some type of public library service, including access to shared library catalogs across the state and connected to the State Library of Kansas. Other regional library system services include continuing education, board development, technology support, consulting, funding grants, shared technology systems, shared materials, and processing services (Hastings et al., 2016). These seven systems are managed by independent boards who have "budget-setting and policy-making authority" (Hastings et al., 2016, p. 240).

With technology advancements and cuts to state aid and, in some cases, local library budgets, many Kansas libraries would be in trouble without the regional library systems. As Rossville Community Library Director Adrienne Olejnik (2016) wrote on her political campaign Facebook page on March 13, 2016:

> Most people aren't aware of regional library systems, but they are the backbone of public library service in Kansas. Rossville's regional library system, NEKLS [Northeast Kansas Library System], provides the highest quality in training, support, and advocacy that allows our library to function smoothly...I could

go on and on about the wonderful support my library has benefited from in the six years I've been director. Without regional library systems, our community libraries would significantly suffer, and therefore, our communities would suffer.

Additional threats to libraries include the elimination of the federal Institute for Museum and Libraries Services' (IMLS) money that is used to fund state and local library projects (Price, 2017). Threats could also come from local funding challenges, another recession, and continued political and policy battles over library funding, an area neglected by library scholarship (Jaeger et al., 2014, p. xi).

Kansas Advocacy Efforts Against HB 2719

On March 8, 2016, HB 2719 was introduced into the Kansas House and was referred to the House Taxation Committee, where a bill hearing was scheduled for Monday, March 14 (KLA, 2016, March 11). The bill was "AN ACT concerning local government; relating to certain taxing jurisdictions, approval of bonds, tax levies by electors or elected bodies" and it was meant to "empower the citizens of Kansas with a means to control the amount of property taxes levied against real and personal property by requiring any such taxes to be levied or approved by an elected body" (House Committee on Taxation, 2016, p. 1). On the first page, the bill appeared innocuous. But inside, the bill required multiple types of special taxing authorities (regional library systems, museums, recreation commissions, one city university, fire districts, airport authorities, water districts, and city libraries) to put their budgets to a general public vote instead of board approval. Multiple sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 21, specifically addressed libraries. The bill contained 84 references to libraries.

The Kansas Library Association (KLA) put out a call for legislative action, describing the bill's major purpose was:

> to remove taxing authority from library boards and regional library systems. While this in itself is disturbing, the bill would also require a public vote on a yearly basis to decide whether or not to fund each of the 7 regional library systems. This would most likely mean the end of the regional library systems and the loss of statewide resource sharing. (KLA, 2016, March 11)

Specific talking points included a discussion of efficient and effective library sharing facilitated by the regional

library systems; that regional library budget oversight already existed at multiple levels; and that "32.4 percent of libraries in Kansas have budgets less than $20,000. These libraries cannot survive without grants and professional services from the regional library systems. 48 communities lose their libraries; 58 more would be at risk" (Kansas Library Association, 2016).

Regional library systems posted messages to Facebook pages, which were in turn shared by librarians, library supporters, libraries, and concerned citizens inside and outside of Kansas. The NEKLS message began with the sentence, "Newly introduced HB 2719 will end Kansas public library service as we now know it" (Northeast Kansas Library System, 2016). This post was shared 172 times and reached over 18,000 people on Facebook. Southwest Kansas Library System's (SWKLS) Facebook message included a discussion of the costly budget election process, and that the bill included no recourse if the budget failed to pass: "HB 2719 would require SWKLS to hold annual special elections in its 7 taxing counties. This is a difficult and a costly process that would have to be paid for by SWKLS. There is no remedy or recourse if the elections fail to approve a budget" (Southwest Kansas Library System, 2016). Central Kansas Library System (2016) described the public libraries in Kansas and what the bill's impact could be:

> There are 329 public libraries in Kansas. Of these, 294 libraries serve communities of less than 10,000 (and are considered rural). 503,326 people are served by these 294 libraries. If HB2719 passes and makes it impossible for these 294 libraries to be funded, more than half a million Kansans will be without library service including access to the Internet (which is often only available to these residents through their library).

What happened next is worthy of its own study. Over the next few days, hundreds of social media messages were crafted, legislators were emailed and called, and at least 17 pieces of written testimony were submitted to the House Taxation Committee (Kansas Legislature, 2016). Almost all were authored by librarians or library supporters against HB 2719. When the hearing came around, library supporters packed a small hearing room. Warburton (2016) described it as such, "The hearing room's 52 seats for the public filled quickly; other observers jammed the perimeter around the legislators while more crowded in the outer hallway." A play-by-play of the hearing was posted to Twitter by several people and I gathered many of these posts into a Storify creation, a digital content storyteller website (Braum, 2016). Numerous media outlets covered the hearing (Carpenter, 2016; Gosnell, 2016; Clarkin, 2016; KAKE News, 2016; Koranda, 2016, March 14). Ultimately, the library related sections were amended on March 18 (Koranda, 2016, March 18).

Research Design and Researcher Positionality

For this study, a scenarios methodology (Elahi et al., 2014) was chosen, to look at what could come next out of advocacy efforts that succeed or fail, as well as helping library advocates see possible creative ways of responding to seemingly potential catastrophic changes to public library funding and/or services.

Before describing that, my connections need to be described. I was deeply involved in the original advocacy efforts against HB 2719, and I was also a long-time employee of a Kansas regional library system. My own words are part of the HB 2719 advocacy record. I crafted hundreds of social media posts through my own personal pages, as well as on my own organization's social media pages; I left comments on an untold number of other posts. I also authored multiple blog posts. I am deeply tied to this event, and that needs to be disclosed.

Methodology

This study uses a scenarios methodology (Elahi et al., 2014; Ramirez, et al., 2015), to craft three possible scenarios of the future of the Kansas library community after advocacy efforts. According to Elahi et al. (2014), scenarios enable "us to take a fresh look at the world and opens our eyes to other possibilities…[and] provide us with a framework that enables us to examine any possible blind-spots we might have, to compare our individual assumptions about the future with others and to explore how the forces of change might impact upon its future" (p. 1). Ramirez et al. (2015) describe scenarios as "a small bespoke set of structured conceptual systems of equally plausible future contexts, often presented as narrative descriptions, manufactured for someone and for a purpose, typically to provide inputs for further work" (p. 71).

The scenarios are based on what is known about the Kansas library community, as well as anticipating potential future threats. Some of the descriptions in the

scenarios are based on direct quotes from social media posts during the real HB 2719 advocacy efforts. These posts, mostly from Facebook, were archived in late March 2016, via several Facebook search queries, including variations of "Kansas Libraries," "KS Libraries," "regional library system," and "HB 2719." Facebook does not have a robust search available, particularly one that allows date-specific searches. I recognized in March 2016 that the Facebook posts needed to be archived in some manner to be reviewed and utilized at a later date. When a relevant post was located, it was archived as a link and a screenshot using the Zotero software. Additionally, surrounding posts on the poster's site were reviewed to locate additional content. The archived posts were mostly public; some were posted by librarians, some by library supporters, some by library Facebook pages, and some by politically focused Facebook pages. In all, almost 1900 Facebook posts were archived; at this time, some duplication exists in that count.

Scenarios Setup

The following scenarios are set up under the following circumstances: a decade has passed since the 2020 Kansas Legislature took up HB 9876, a bill that proposed to remove local library board budgetary authority, drop bill levy caps back to 0.75, and repeal the state statutes that established the Kansas regional library systems and their tax funding structures. The scenarios explore the state of the Kansas library community in 2030, partially crafted based on advocacy messages shared by Kansas library supporters during the March 2016 advocacy efforts against HB 2719, as well as past messages in historical documents, and working to predict where the Kansas library community could be in 2030. Specifically, the scenarios will be based on three possible outcomes to the fictional HB 9876.

Scenario 1: A Decade of Advocacy

One librarian's reflections on the March events.

I remember March 2020 quite well. One afternoon, I was preparing for summer reading in between courier processing and managing the circulation desk when the phone rang. I picked it up, and Tessi, the librarian in the next town started in before I could even say hello.

"'Did you see THE email or all the Facebook posts yet?'

'No, I haven't been in my email since lunchtime. You know I'm the only one working today and there are courier bags to fill…' Tessi broke in.

'The State Legislature is coming after our libraries, but even worse, the regionals are targeted.'

'WHAT?!?!?'

'My library can't survive without my regional system grant. That's my materials budget, technology purchases, and story time supplies. And all the different ways they support us…' (Stevens County, 2016).

'I know…Without our NEKLS grant, we would have to close" (Effingham, 2016).

'I'm hanging up the phone now to read those messages, call the library board, the friends groups, my super patrons, the mayor, and my representative!'

Little did Kansas librarians know when word began to spread that March day, that they would succeed in their advocacy efforts. The librarians called and emailed legislators and neighbors, told patrons, board members, and friends groups, posted on social media, and traveled to the bill hearing. Rural advocates from across the state picked up on the situation and traveled to Topeka. "My heart is breaking," one wrote. "I'm going to Topeka on Monday … and want you to come, too. Can you? Some of the best of rural Kansas is in jeopardy -- libraries, fire departments" (Penner, 2016).

Legislators were stunned at the filled hearing room. Testimony after testimony had legislators admitting they had no idea of the bill's ramifications or the impact of the regional library systems. When it was all over, the bill was tabled, effectively killed and it died at the end of session (Kansas Legislative Research Department, p. 47). Kansas librarians and library supporters cheered and celebrated, and then went to work over the next ten years.

A statewide marketing campaign was launched to celebrate the regional library systems and educate Kansans about how these small, previously hidden organizations impacted the entire state. Legislators were brought into regional library system offices for presentations on the various ways the Kansas library community was effectively, efficiently, and collaboratively using tax dollars to serve all Kansans from the tiniest communities to the

largest metropolitan areas. Legislators were so impressed, new studies were ordered to discover what the economic impact of these libraries were on Kansas communities, particularly the role of the regional library systems in the communities. The findings were astounding and became a model for other states.

As new library technologies were adopted, and local libraries continued to be unable to afford platforms that were higher than their entire budgets, the regional libraries would offer these platforms as consortia services. Agreements were entered into with the larger urban libraries to offer even more services.

Education of small library directors continued to be a challenge, but the regional libraries worked with library schools to create special bachelor degrees specifically created for small public library directors, degrees that were mostly funded through scholarships and donations.

Kansas librarians and library supporters continued to advocate for their libraries; after many years of diminishing state aid that had reached a pittance level, the 2030 Kansas Legislature grew tired of hearing from the library community and finally developed a plan to increase state aid again to levels that would help library's serve communities at higher levels than ever before.

Scenario 2: Things Fall Apart

Another librarian's reflections on the March events and what came next.

> I remember March 2020 with a hefty dose of cynicism. We were so naïve back then. When HB 9876 was introduced we fought like cats and dogs against it. The legislature removed the amended part of the bill (the repeal of the regional library systems), but all the libraries lost our budgetary authority and we had to fight with the city or township or county for dwindling tax dollars every year, because the state kept taking away local tax dollars to fill the gaps in its own state budget. The worst parts? The State Library was eliminated eight years ago, and the regional systems were repealed five years ago.

After advocacy efforts half-succeeded and half-failed, the Kansas library community went back to serving communities, but as library budgets began to shrink–due to

cities and townships and counties making all budgetary decisions and deprioritizing the library–libraries that had money continued to thrive and libraries that didn't turned inward. Interlibrary loan numbers began to decline. Libraries pulled out of shared systems because they couldn't justify costs anymore; cities wanted them to only be paying for services for city residents. When the State Library was eliminated due to continued budget crises and because of the *why are libraries still needed with the Internet?* attitude, the statewide interlibrary loan system completely fell apart, the state lost its federal funding, and several statewide technology platforms disappeared.

Cities continued to be unhappy that residents who weren't paying taxes could use the library and its services, and so five years ago, they successfully lobbied the legislature to repeal the regional library system statutes. Soon, libraries returned to charging people if they lived outside the city. As one librarian who used to work in Florida described, this was a return to the past, "When I worked in a public library in Florida, we had to charge for library services for people that lived outside of the district. Issuing library cards was an arduous process. It felt contrary to the spirit of public libraries, a spirit so celebrated and embraced over the last 140 years" (Taylor, 2016).

After the 2020 advocacy efforts, Kansas librarians were disheartened and stopped working together; eventually, the entire system fell apart. Local communities closed the doors on their libraries as library budgets dwindled to zero, and communities no longer saw the library as a vibrant space. As librarian Andy Woodworth (2017) posted to Twitter, "Things that are not the library killer: Internet, Amazon, ebooks, cafes, makerspaces, mission creep, paraprofs Things that are: Funding." The death of advocacy and collaboration can kill libraries, too.

Scenario 3: Ad Astra Per Aspera

Yet another librarian's reflections on the March events and what came next.

> When the Kansas legislature passed HB 9876 in 2020, completely gutting the infrastructure and funding authority of Kansas libraries, I figured this was it. The Kansas library community has ended as we knew it (Northeast Kansas Library System, 2016). Our advocacy efforts were in vain. The legislature hated libraries, didn't see their value. But Kansas library leaders

didn't give up. They remembered and embraced the state motto of Kansas: Ad Astra Per Aspera, To The Stars Through the Difficulties. And a new, stronger Kansas library community was born.

The transformation took a few years. When HB 9876 passed and went into effect, regional library systems closed, and many local libraries lost a large portion of their local funding, when they lost system grants. Shared catalog systems, managed and mostly paid for by the systems were turned over to the largest library in each shared system. The statewide courier service shut down. Continuing education in Kansas libraries disappeared. More than 100 libraries whose budgets were under $20,000 closed their doors over the next few years. Many other libraries suffered, Kansas library collaboration ended, and the library community was in disarray.

A summit in 2022 brought together leaders from existing libraries and communities, civic organizers, elected officials, schools, businesses, and anyone else who just loved libraries. People in Kansas still supported libraries, and wanted to re-imagine what library service in a rural state could look like again. And re-imagine they did.

New models of library service were examined. No idea was off-limits. True statewide library funding, modeled after school finance formulas to begin balancing out differences between community budget realities, was passed by the state legislature five years ago. Thanks to the summit, leaders across Kansas were surprised to discover all the different ways Kansas libraries were helping communities grow, and a whole new powerful group of library advocates were created.

It took a few years, but today, in 2030, Kansas libraries are now modeled after the Kansas City, Kansas, Public Library, where the school district board manages and governs the local public library finances; a separately appointed library board decides on library policies. As public library funding structures were decimated, school librarians in Kansas were also being eliminated (Weller, 2017). The summit resulted in new library research being funded and the challenges facing rural libraries in remote parts of Kansas are being addressed. There is talk the regional model might return. The next legislative session in 2031 will be interesting.

Conclusions

Tax and budget policy and political advocacy may not always come immediately to mind with information policy implications, but public libraries depend on these policies for budgets. Additionally, cuts to state and federal library funding can impact libraries of all types, particularly when that money is going toward interlibrary loan platforms, research databases, digital content platforms, broadband infrastructure, and more. The Institute for Museum and Library Services federal funding is threatened under the current administration's budget blueprint and has been on the chopping block in previous congressional budgets. Library and information advocacy in the political world may become more critical in the years to come, if these discussions continue about why there's local, state, and federal money tied up in library services. Future research on additional advocacy campaigns needs to conducted, particularly more thorough systematic examinations of the messages used during advocacy efforts and particularly a study of what did actually come next after a massive advocacy campaign, instead of the fictionalized but grounded scenarios described in this article.

The scenarios come out of a deep understanding of the Kansas library community, where it came from, where it is today, and where it could go. The scenarios could easily be lengthened to multiple pages. But, more than anything, they should be offered as conversation starters in the library community to begin to think "what if?" Scenario 1 was the easiest to craft because it built on the energy from the initial advocacy efforts. Originally, Scenario 3 was crafted to be the worst-case scenario, but it turned out to be the most creative one. All possibilities and solutions were considered when the whole system fell apart all at once, but people remained committed to supporting libraries, albeit in a very different way. Scenario 2 was another worst case scenario because the structure fell apart gradually and people never felt empowered to react at the scale they had done initially.

The Kansas library community learned numerous valuable lessons in its actual advocacy efforts against HB 2719, as did legislators. Rep. Hineman told librarians after the hearing, "Thank you for your letters. They were not canned. Each was individual. That is very good" (Braum,

2016a, March 14). Rep. Kleeb said, "Thanks for clearing out the cobwebs" (Braum, 2016b, March 14). May other librarians learn similar lessons from this study and consider what comes next after an advocacy campaign.

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Academic Libraries and Vulnerable Student Populations:

A New Model of Embedded Librarianship for First-Generation University Students

Adriana Parker

Abstract

There is compelling evidence in student services literature that first-generation students are more responsive to and better served by a "one-stop shop" model of institutionalized support that embeds university resources and services into a specialized program. Such programs are designed to provide students with a community of support through which they learn how to navigate social, academic, financial, and administrative challenges at the university. This case study explores the unique barriers, challenges, and needs of a cohort of one hundred first-generation students at the University of Utah and evaluates the effectiveness of a new approach to embedded librarianship within a "one-stop shop" model, focusing on relationship-building in order to more successfully teach information literacy concepts and skills.

Introduction

As instruction librarians, we understand the inherent value of the embedded model of librarianship. It has become the gold standard for information literacy instruction since Barbara I. Dewey's seminal article, "The Embedded Librarian: Strategic Campus Collaborations," was published in 2004. It is corollary that the more time we spend with our students, the more likely they are to learn, practice, retain, and apply the information literacy concepts and skills we have taught them. They are also more inclined to reach out to us for help outside of the classroom. The bulk of the literature around embedded librarianship focuses on course content design, classroom environments (physical and electronic), and teaching strategies; however, in this case study, I will instead discuss how I developed a new approach to embedded librarianship in order to better serve a cohort of first-generation students at the University of Utah.

In Fall Semester 2016, I was asked to serve as the J. Willard Marriott Library's liaison to the Beacon Scholars Program. This program provides first-generation students with a community of support to navigate social, academic, financial, and administrative challenges at the university. Even before their first semester, Beacon Scholars enrolls students in a summer bridge program that helps them to orient themselves in higher educa-

tion, as well as to the University of Utah campus. Beacon Scholars offers support throughout the entire university experience—from before the first day of class through graduation.

Initially, when I met with Trever Bruhn, the Beacon Scholars Program Director, he was unsure how to effectively navigate a library partnership, or if there was even value in maintaining one. Bruhn explained that, in previous academic years, the librarian had provided one information literacy session in the library, which was appreciated and well-received, but there was little engagement between his students and the library beyond that. The previous liaison confirmed that only a handful of the Beacon students whom he taught had reached out to him for research support over the course of the two years that he served in this role.

Bruhn expressed that while he would like to have seen a greater librarian presence in the course, he was also concerned that the class schedule couldn't accommodate additional library visits and that, if it turned out to be a repeat of their previous library experience, the students would not be responsive to my instruction or outreach anyhow. So, I suggested that we alter our approach radically. Rather than teaching a one-hour instruction session each academic year, I would instead attend each class throughout Fall and Spring semesters and provide a few brief instruction sessions, as well as on-site research support as needed. I would also participate in facilitating class activities.

Bruhn agreed to experiment with this new model and give me feedback as we progressed, allowing me to tailor my content to the students' needs at critical times during the academic calendar (midterms, finals, etc.). Although I would be fully embedded in the course, I wouldn't be lecturing each class session or providing for-credit assignments to the students to practice their information literacy skills. It was an unorthodox approach to teaching information literacy but, based on my understanding of the typical first-generation student experience, I felt confident that it would be a more effective strategy for reaching the expected information literacy learning outcomes than the one-shot sessions in previous years.

The First-Generation University Student Experience

In order to understand my rationale for proposing this alternative embedded model and to assess its effectiveness, it is critical to discuss the first-generation student experience. The literature tells us that it is generally characterized by fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and even shame. According to Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, and Terenzini (2004),

> [T]he evidence is reasonably clear that first-generation students as a group have a more difficult transitions from secondary school to college than their peers. Not only do first-generation students confront all the anxieties, dislocations, and difficulties of any college student, their experiences often involve substantial cultural as well as social and academic transitions.... Compared to students whose parents are college graduates, first-generation students are more likely to leave a four-year institution at the end of the first year, less likely to remain enrolled in a four-year institution or be on a persistence track to a bachelor's degree after three years, and are less likely to stay enrolled or attain a bachelor's degree after five years" (p. 250).

Lacking the institutional knowledge that traditional undergraduates have provided to them by parents or older siblings who previously attended a university, first-generation students must learn how to navigate a complex university system as they go.

> The new opportunities that some students view as exciting may be intimidating to a first-generation student who is less familiar with the ins and outs of college life. 'Whether it's walking into an unknown office, reading a bill statement, or talking with PhD faculty, the level of "scary" could keep first-generation students from reaching out,' says Lynda Sukolsky, director of the Academic Achievement Center at Seton Hill University. 'It's safer to just avoid or safer to try and navigate things on your own'" (as cited in Haskins, 2016, para. 7).

Additionally, first-generation students are less likely than their peers to access university resources and services. In part, this is because they do not know that these resources and services exist and are available to them, but also because they fear that asking for help will be read by staff and faculty as being ill-prepared for college life, obliviousness, or inadequacy. Confessing that a first-generation student does not understand a particular college task, coupled with the misperception that their peers know how to accomplish this task, undermines the student's sense of independence and can lead to feelings of failure and shame. Efforts to empower and normalize these kinds of experiences for first-generation students are shown to improve student retention and success (O'Connor, 2016).

Strayhorn (2006) recommends that "programs targeting specific groups may be better suited to address the particular challenges faced by segments of the student population, such as black men or first-generation college students" (p. 104). The Beacon Scholars Program is designed to fulfill such a goal. Resources and services are embedded into the Beacon Scholars program in order to remove barriers to first-generation students asking for help. Over time, students are able to build trust with faculty and staff, develop a comfort level with seeking support, and understand the myriad of resources that are available to them. As students build these college life skills, Beacon Scholars staff are able to refer students out to other entities on campus with confidence that students will follow through on those referrals.

First-Generation Students at the University of Utah

As of January 2015, the University of Utah identified 32% of incoming freshmen as first-generation university students (Office of the President, para. 3). That same year, Beacon Scholars showed a 190% increase in enrollment from the previous academic year. The program enrollment is now capped at 100 students because of limited resources.

Beacon Scholars serves a diverse student population. In Fall 2016, 106 students enrolled in the program. Of these, 1% identified as American Indian; 3% as Pacific Islander; 3% as black; 4% as white; 19% as Asian; and 71% as Latinx. More than three-quarters of this student group identified as female. In addition, approximately 20% identified as undocumented (with or without DACA status).

Methods

With this framework in place to help Beacon Scholars students navigate the university's systems, it made more sense for me to be fully embedded into Beacon Scholars

as a member of the support staff—one who represents the library as a campus institution and system—than for me to provide an isolated one-shot instruction session annually or even a more traditional, multiple-visits-to-the-library model of embedded librarianship. Location is critical to this model. If students could learn how to use library resources and services from within a space where they felt comfortable, they would be more inclined to engage with me and, consequently, to develop their information literacy skills.

Because Beacon Scholars enrolls one hundred students maximum each year, this group is divided into halves; there are fifty students in the Thursday cohort and fifty in the Friday cohort. Each cohort is led by two student leaders, who have already completed (at minimum) one academic year as student members of Beacon Scholars. Student leaders are supported by Beacon Scholars staff, including Mr. Bruhn and a program coordinator, as well as support staff from the Office of Engagement and a dedicated student success advocate.

Classes met for two hours each week. The first hour is dubbed "Social Hour," and the second is "Project Hour." During Social Hour, I facilitate class activities alongside the other members of the support staff. These activities are designed to foster relationship-building and community among the students, staff, and faculty. During Project Hour, we participate in activities that are designed to support students as they carve their academic paths by teaching them how to engage campus resources. We also provide activities that support the development of students' course projects.

I teach one 60-minute session each semester, using active learning techniques and problem-based learning activities. I also provide brief point-of-need lectures, offer practice exercises that are connected to the course research projects, and lead discussions—all of which takes place in the Beacon Scholars classroom during Project Hour. I also field spontaneous research questions as they arise any time during the two-hour class period and outside of class as well by text, email, or in person.

Results and Analysis

By the end of our first academic year using this alternative model of embedded librarianship in Beacon Scholars,

I had met with 44 students outside of class for research consultations, in addition to those who asked for extended research support (30+ minutes) during class. In general, this was at least one student per class visit each week. This was a significant increase in the number of student consultations through Beacon Scholars, compared to the three previous years.

The value of being embedded in the program as a member of the support staff—especially in facilitating classroom activities that aren't information literacy focused—is that students had numerous opportunities to see me as a whole person, rather than an unknown authority figure. In turn, I also got to know them on a personal level. Over the course of our year together, we learned each other's names, personalities, interests, and stories. We developed relationships, rather than sharing a series of isolated classroom visits. By taking the time to develop rapport, we were able to negotiate how to communicate effectively. In the process, I taught them how to engage help from one of the biggest, most unfamiliar institutions on campus: the library.

Students learned through their interactions with me each week that the library is a key partner in their success. Because I met them where they were in the Beacon Scholars classroom—one of a few spaces on campus where they feel comfortable and safe—I became a reliable fixture of that space for them. This model also gave students opportunities to build trust with the library through their relationship with me, as we simultaneously built their confidence to ask for help. They learned to successfully access and use many library resources from within their Beacon home base before they ever entered the physical library.

Because Beacon Scholars is a multi-year cohort program, the impact of this alternative model of embedded librarianship on my relationship-building efforts is cumulative. I have the opportunity to see students return from one year to the next. And because I'm familiar to those returning students, new students are less intimidated by my presence and more likely to seek out my help and respond to me after seeing their peers doing so.

Resulting Library Services Modifications

As much as I represent the library while I am in the

Beacon Scholars classroom and offices, I also represent Beacon Scholars at my library. I learned through this model that there are significant barriers to accessing library support that are unique to first-generation students. In order to improve the library's services for this under-served and vulnerable population, at the beginning of the Fall Semester 2017, I began to collect data about Beacon Scholars students' technology access, skills, and needs. In addition to completing a pre-instruction assessment of their information literacy skills, students answered a brief questionnaire. Of the 100 members of the cohort, 86 completed the assessment and questionnaire.

As a result, I learned that while 93% of students surveyed have access to a home computer/device for their home-work needs, 18% of those students do not have reliable Wi-Fi at home. This information became especially valu-able from a library services and marketing perspective, when I learned that the majority of students surveyed (67%) weren't aware that the library can lend them Wi-Fi hotspots.

As mentioned previously, one major barrier is a reticence to engage institutional support in an environment that they are struggling to navigate independently. In my con-versations with students, many described the physical library in terms such as "intimidating," "hard to navi-gate," and "scary." However, with the addition of a fully embedded librarian into the program, this perception of the library building has been lessened significantly. Now, students rarely hesitate to ask me to meet them in the library to help them with their research.

I also learned that, while technology resources in the Bea-con Scholars offices are limited, students prefer to stay there, rather than visiting an unfamiliar library or other equally unfamiliar computer labs on campus. In the small annex building where the Beacon offices and classroom are housed, students have access to six desktop computers that are 7+ years old and two laptops that are 5+ years old. These computers are intended for use by eight staff members, as well as Beacon Scholars students, many of whom do not own their own computers.

For many students, the choose to make the long trek across campus for access to a computer even though they are not guaranteed that one will even be available, because those computers are in the space that they feel

most comfortable. While the computer lab in the library's Knowledge Commons is another option, I discovered that students' library-related anxieties (whether based on fear or previous negative experiences at the library) are a significant barrier to their access.

Another frequently cited barrier to library-provided tech-nology was the four-hour checkout period for laptops, iPads, and other devices. Because a majority of Beacon students consider the Beacon Scholars offices their home base on campus, the trip to and from the library can take up to forty minutes, carving into almost a quarter of the checkout period. I took this information to Catherine Soehner, the library's Associate Dean for Research and User Services, who encouraged me to make a proposal to the New Services Committee. As a result, check-out periods were extended to fifteen hours to better accom-modate all students' needs and access.

This model also provided me with critical insights into our first-generation students' financial needs and the socioeconomic factors that impact their educa-tion. Approximately 90% of students enrolled in Bea-con Scholars in a given year are eligible for Pell Grants. For the approximately 10% of students who are deemed ineligible for Pell Grants, it is often the result of their lack of experience and knowledge in navigating financial systems of higher education. Many of those same in-eligible students have low socioeconomic status and live independently from their parents, but they have not filed the substantial documentation that is required to change their dependency status through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Additionally, a portion of Beacon Scholars students are unable to access federal financial aid due to their immigration status.

However, even when granted aid, many Beacon Scholars students still lack the financial resources to pay Univer-sity of Utah tuition. When a student successfully quali-fies for a Pell Grant, they are awarded $5800 annually, or $2900 per semester. Imagine that this student is enrolling in fifteen credit hours each semester in order to graduate in four academic years. As of the 2016-2017 academic year, tuition fees for fifteen credit hours at the Univer-sity of Utah totaled $4412—and that does not include tuition differentials, which are additional costs associated with classes offered through particular schools (Office of Admissions, 2017). For example, for each credit hour

in math and science, there is a $20 fee; while, for each credit hour in business, the tuition differential is $197.68. The financial impact is a potentially large one for Beacon Scholars students, especially, where the majority of declared majors are pre-medicine, pre-law, engineering, and business. These are the areas that have the most frequent tuition differentials. A student could opt to take fewer credit hours, but in order to be considered a full-time student, they must enroll in twelve credit hours at minimum. Tuition is then $3730 per semester (excluding applicable tuition differentials), which means that there is a balance of at least $830 per semester that the student is responsible for. As a result, approximately 63% of students enrolled in Beacon Scholars for the 2017-2018 academic year hold jobs in addition to attending the university on a full-time basis.

With this valuable data presented in the context of the first-generation student experience and existing institutional support, my library was able to enact meaningful changes to our services and resources. Associate Deans Catherine Soehner and Harish Maringanti recently designated ten laptops that will be donated to the Beacon Scholars Program. These laptops were either formerly assigned to library employees or part of the circulating laptop collection in the Knowledge Commons; they will now be re-imaged, updated, and housed at the Beacon Scholars offices.

Conclusion

For first-generation students, a significant barrier to college success is a reticence to engage institutional support. This reticence generally originates from a combination of historically poor support from other major institutions throughout their lives, fears around the potential repercussions of asking for help, and a lack of awareness about the existence of university resources and services. One meaningful way that universities have worked toward engaging first-generation students is to focus on relationship-building by creating small communities of institutionalized support. These specialized communities partner with other campus organizations to ensure that students have access to all university resources and services.

If my experience is representative, librarians have a tremendous opportunity to embed themselves into these

communities. We can use our new embedded experiences as a setting to teach information literacy; to learn from first-generation students about their needs, challenges, and abilities; and to develop services and resources that are better suited to them.

All students struggle to some extent to acclimate to college life, but for first-generation students, it is important for educators and administrators to acknowledge that the playing field is not level, especially when so many are also members of marginalized groups (students of color, undocumented students, LGBTQ students, students who are identified as low-income status). It is easy to dismiss many barriers because, on the surface, they don't appear to be inherently institutional. It is also easy to confuse fear or anxiety around university systems with a lack of student motivation. But by embedding a librarian into a "one-stop shop" model of institutionalized support, we can learn critical information about our first-generation students as they begin to navigate social, academic, financial, and administrative challenges at the university. Refocusing our efforts on building relationships with students allows librarians to influence the efficiency at which we begin to level the playing field, which will, consequently, support all students to succeed.

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Proposal Deadline: April 20, 2018

We seek submissions from both researchers and practitioners, that fall into one of three submission categories:
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- •White Papers – Longer form discussions that may include research.
- •Peer Reviewed – Long form articles that include original research and arguments, and are submitted for review by our Editorial Board and/or external reviewers.

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Submission Categories:

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- •White Papers – Longer form discussions that may include research (2000-5000 words).
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If you want to propose and article for The Political Librarian, please submit the following:

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2. Attach resume/CV or a link to an online version.
3. Writing sample: this can be a fully completed article, blog post, essay, etc. Our goal is to see your style and ability not judge where the writing comes from.

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Accepted submission formats are Word documents (doc, docx), rich text or text files (rtf, txt). Please do not send PDFs of article submissions. This hinders the editorial process, and you will have to resubmit.

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- •Double-spaced lines.
- •12pt standard font (Times, Times New Roman, Calibri, etc).
- •Single space between sentences.
- •Use the Oxford comma.
- •Spell out acronyms the first time they are used.
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