

## **Final Reflection**

Jennifer Justice

Department of STEM Education & Professional Studies

Old Dominion University

LIBS 674: Management and Leadership in Library and Information Studies

Dr. Amelia Anderson

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### 1.) *Reflecting on Management and Leadership in Librarianship*

I decided to look back to my Ethics assignment to help me answer our first reflection question regarding management and leadership behaviors and skills needed for navigating challenges and tasks in our field. I mentioned in that assignment that equipping ourselves to make choices and take actions that will benefit and uphold the rights of all parties is an essential part of leadership. After taking this course I realized it is not always ethical “dilemmas” that ask us to step up as leaders, as there will be many everyday situations that will arise while managing a library. Moran and Morner (2017), provide an ethical framework that tells us we must consider what decision will result in the greatest good with the least amount of harm, what will protect the rights and freedoms of those involved and what will ensure fairness and equal treatment in terms of social justice.

Revisiting the Ethics assignment, I saw that the librarian’s role as “protector” can not be overstated. Protecting a patron’s right to information, protecting the integrity of your institution and protecting a person’s right to belong and benefit from the library were all highlighted in the ethical dilemmas I addressed. Throughout the course, I realized a good leader and manager must also protect their team. Actively looking out for the people that work for your organization is so important. No one wants to work in a place where they do not feel seen, heard or respected. We learned about the importance of upward communication and the level of trust and comfort that instills. Providing (and receiving) meaningful feedback builds relationships between a manager and their employees. That feeling of having your thoughts, opinions and ideas not only valued but safe to openly express creates an environment where the flow of information

and opportunities for growth is inclusive and welcome. Not only that, it's great for productivity and a good manager knows that. One article we read pointed out that, "Gallup data shows that when employees strongly agree they received 'meaningful feedback'...they are almost four times more likely than other employees to be engaged" (McClain & Morgan, 2022, para. 1).

An effective manager must also exhibit tact and diplomacy. I felt this was highlighted in the situation regarding appropriate relationships with vendors in my Ethics assignment. A good leader acts as a representative for their institution. When you are the one in a position to liaise with many different people and organizations, you must behave in a way that ensures your library is seen as respectable and reputable. Your employees look to you as the "decision maker" for the entire team and this responsibility should not be taken lightly. Engaging in behaviors that are self-serving or less than savory does not just affect you when you are in a leadership position. In this course we learned about the many different hats a library manager must wear. This role often takes you out into the community for outreach. Representing the library in a positive manner while engaging in events, programming and meetings will only enhance your institution's image and invite more patrons and sponsors to want to visit and support your library.

Lastly, I believe an effective leader must be an advocate. This ties in closely with being seen as a protector but I believe deserves its own reflection. In my Ethics paper, I chose to explore in depth the issue regarding patrons who were experiencing homelessness and their use of library services and facilities. I pointed out that I feel strongly that a library is a place for everyone. The American Library Association shares

this belief. The ALA Code of Ethics states, “We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces” (American Library Association, 2021, Code of Ethics, 9). This is such a strong statement! It really drives home that a library manager’s most important task is to be an agent of change and an advocate for others. Acknowledging inherent biases and beliefs, a good leader must work to demonstrate alternative ways of thinking and doing. I suggested in my assignment that instead of focusing on the “us” we shift our focus to “them”. Acting with empathy we are able to shift from “how is this situation/patron a perceived inconvenience to me/my library?” to “what can I do to help?” Encouraging others to channel the energy they spend complaining into actively finding solutions is an essential part of leadership. In the case of patrons experiencing homelessness, being an advocate and an ally goes a long way. As a manager, you have the ability to implement change in your organization and your entire community by finding ways to ensure equal access and treatment at your institution. We discussed in this course how the concept of change can make people very uncomfortable. Being a leader that enthusiastically and positively shows how change can benefit ourselves and others is key to getting people on board with new ideas and initiatives.

#### Resources:

American Library Association. (2021). *Code of ethics*. <https://www.ala.org/tools/ethics>

Mcclain, D., and Morgan, I. (2022). How fast feedback fuels performance. *Gallup's Workplace*.

Moran, B.B. & Morner, C.J. (2017). *Library and information center management*. (9th ed.). ABC-CLIO.

## 2.) *Reflecting on a Library's Vision and Mission and How They Inspire Action*

While working on our Strategic Planning assignment, I investigated the vision and mission statements of the Chrysler Museum of Art and how they impacted the special library associated with the institution, The Jean Outland Chrysler Library.

Existing to support its parent institution, the Chrysler Library shares many of its present values and goals for the future. The Chrysler mission and vision statements are as follows:

### **Mission Statement:**

The Chrysler Museum exists to enrich and transform lives. We bring art and people together through experiences that delight, transform and inspire.

### **Vision Statement:**

At the Chrysler Museum, we invite everyone to find meaning through original works of art. We offer a world-class collection in our beautiful and historic home in Norfolk, Virginia. We seek out a diverse audience to share in our passion for art and its importance in our lives. We create a highly accessible and compelling museum encounter, leading the field in development of a multi-layered and engaging approach to the total visitor experience, including all aspects of interpretation, learning and customer service.

(<https://www.chrysler.org>)

I believe that the mission statement of the museum, and by extension, the library is indicative of what a mission statement should be. It points out why the institution exists and what it hopes to accomplish. I do feel the mission statement is more aimed at the museum aspect of the institution and the Jean Outland Chrysler Library gets lost in the mix. The issue here is that the library is non-circulating and is used mostly by art professionals, staff and researchers. There is a public reading room open three days a week, but so many of the resources don't feel as accessible to a wider audience where they may have the opportunity to "delight, transform and inspire". This is a shame because the Jean Outland Chrysler Library is one of the most significant art libraries in the South, housing over 300,000 volumes. I would include the museum's satellite entities (the library, the glass studio) in a revised mission statement. It really can be a well rounded experience to come to the museum and see not just the physical collections but be able to research something amazing you just saw in a gallery at the museum's library. Or to be so inspired by the glass collection that you walk over to the glass studio and see a glass blowing demonstration. The museum has so much to offer and the library deserves to be highlighted as the amazing resource it is.

I like the vision statement in the sense that it details all of the things the organization does to ensure a great visitor experience. It hints at what it hopes to accomplish yet does not give examples or action steps. And again, how does the Jean Outland Chrysler Library fit in with the museum's aspirations? I have several ideas how the library and museum can work together to help achieve their overarching mission over the next three years. The first is quite simply to highlight the resources and physical presence of the Jean Outland Chrysler Library. I work in the museum. Most

visitors have no idea the library even exists. In fact, it exists down a long dark corridor in the back corner of the building in an area that does not look like it should be accessible to visitors. On the three days where the reading room is open, we put a sign at the end of the hallway with an arrow guiding visitors to the library. This is the only sign directing guests to the library and you have to physically be in a particular gallery to see it. If we want to incorporate the library's resources into an inspirational museum experience, we need to invite them more effectively. Better signage leading to the library is a simple first start. Highlighting the library's location and what resources are available could be easily accomplished. Positioning a countertop sign or a pamphlet about the library at the museum welcome desk (which all visitors are encouraged to "check in" at) will draw countless more people to the library. Adding the line "please visit the Jean Outland Chrysler Library for more information on this topic" at the bottom of existing signage in the galleries encourages visitors to further explore and connect with the collections.

I also propose bringing the library (and librarian Liz Weir) out into the museum and community. Liz, a former Chrysler gallery host, knows what an important connection the library has to the museum. If anyone knows how the library's resources could benefit the museum's visitors it is her. Having worked both in the museum and the library Liz is a unique resource herself. She could assist with the museum's education classes and programs, pulling resources from the library for student use. For example, if a school group is in the education workshop making an art inspired craft, Liz could bring reference materials from the library's collection to enhance the experience. At museum events, it would be great to include a table highlighting the library and its

services. We recently had a career day with tables dedicated to different jobs at a museum. A table with information about becoming a special librarian is a must and could inspire others to pursue this field. Even just having gallery hosts encourage visitors who have questions about the art or artists to stop by our library, or better yet, direct them there, would be great for the library's visibility.

My last proposal touches on the vision of creating an engaging and multi-layered approach to the total visitor experience. I know I covered this in great detail in my strategic planning assignment, but I would love to see more digital and touch technology incorporating the library's resources included in the museum. We have a few iPads in stands with slideshow presentations programmed on them in three galleries. But they are older models that die frequently and visitors are not allowed to touch them. Updating the technology, with touch screen interfaces featuring articles, photographs, selections from books and interactive activities pulled from the Jean Outland Chrysler Library's collections would welcome visitors to explore this information in a new and exciting way. This undertaking would take a bit of funding but I discovered in my Grant Proposal that with proper research and planning, there is funding available for this sort of initiative.

### *3.) Reflecting on Career Growth and Development*

Nearly half way through this graduate program my head is swimming with all of the things I have learned up until this point. Yet I feel like I have so much left to learn about this field and my place in it! This course really opened my eyes to topics that leaders in libraries face and I was intrigued by many of them. One that I did not look



forward to approaching was funding and the financial aspect of running a library. I have never considered myself a math whiz and often find financial concepts overwhelming. The course made me realize that there are great resources available to increase financial literacy and understanding of library budgeting. I know this is a topic that I will encounter in my future career, so running away from it is not an option! I need to get comfortable with understanding the financial responsibilities my institution will face. In my own research, I stumbled upon an excellent PowerPoint presentation from the West Virginia Public Library entitled, "Budget Planning for the Public Library Director". I know I am aspiring to work in a special library but I found this resource very useful and informative. The slides really broke down the steps of planning and implementing a budget and gave examples of what those budgets may look like in the forms of charts.

Resource:

West Virginia Public Library. (2013). *Budget planning for the public library director* [PowerPoint Slides].

<https://librarycommission.wv.gov/Librarian/Documents/Budget%20Planning%20for%20the%20Public%20Library%20Director.pdf>

Another topic that I would like to educate myself further on is diversity and inclusion. I feel very passionate about representation in libraries, archives and museums. As cultural institutions, we need to be able to tell the whole story, incorporating the views and experiences of all races, genders and orientations. In the course of this semester, we discussed the importance of a diverse workforce and making sure that libraries are truly equitable and accessible for all patrons. I feel this is also very important in special collections and archives. Ensuring that historical

materials that tell the story of people who have been silenced and underrepresented throughout history are restored, cared for and shared with the public is vital.

I have an example from my own experience that I would like to share. As part of my job with the museum, I also work at the historic Moses Myers House in downtown Norfolk. Now, although Moses and his family were fascinating people, they were also slave owners. At the house, we have made it a priority to tell the stories of everyone that lived in the house, including the people who were enslaved by the Myers family. This house was a home for more than just its white inhabitants and it is important that we interpret that history correctly and share it with others. We have dedicated an entire room to telling the story of the people who were enslaved and have collected any documents we can find pertaining to them. We are currently working on finding a way to display copies of these documents so that visitors can look through them and gain a better understanding of the history of this home and the people in it.

I recently read an article about making the library a more inclusive place at Duke University based on studies and surveys given to Black students enrolled there. Based on the results, a list of recommendations was presented to help achieve this goal. Recommendations included, “dedicating a library space to Black culture, history, and scholarship; increasing visual representations of people of color in library spaces” (ARL Communications, 2021, para. 5). I believe this ties in with what we are trying to accomplish at the Myers house and what should be done universally at all libraries in our country. I have included a link to this article below. I have also provided a link to the Moses Myers House if you are interested! I will say, the current web page for the

house does a poor job of representing all of its inhabitants, I think an update is long overdue.

#### Resources:

ARL Communications. (2021, February 16th). *Making the library more inclusive by learning from Black students*. Association of Research Libraries.  
<https://www.arl.org/blog/making-the-library-more-inclusive-by-learning-from-black-students/#:~:text=Recommendations%20include%20dedicating%20a%20library,scholarship%20in%20their%20course%20materials>.

<https://chrysler.org/historic-houses/the-moses-myers-house/>

One final topic I would like to learn more about I chose because it really interests me! I have a soft spot for architecture, art and design so I really enjoyed learning about making library spaces more accessible and inviting. From a practical standpoint I found the resources provided in week seven regarding equal access and universal design very interesting. There were many considerations that I had not thought of before. As a library manager, removing barriers to access is a major priority and I look forward to learning more about how I can make that happen. I also loved “peeking” into other libraries virtually and hearing about all of the innovative design choices that are being implemented in modern libraries. The Fayetteville Public Library has real airplanes suspended over its brightly colored children’s section for goodness sake! The architecture magazine, Dezeen, has a great online collection of articles featuring innovative libraries around the world. It makes me dream of what bold choices I would make in a library of my own. I have included a link to that resource below. I love that libraries are pushing the boundaries in terms of design. I also like the ideas of cafes

and community gardens being included at libraries. Libraries are no longer a space where people just go to sit quietly and read, they are spaces meant to connect, inspire and give back to the community. As a future library leader I will always be on the lookout for ways to shake up the status quo and improve the physical environment to be more in tune with my patron's needs.

Resource:

Dezeen. (2022). *Libraries*. <https://www.dezeen.com/tag/libraries/>