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## Directors of Large Libraries: Roles, Functions, and Activities

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### ABSTRACT

THIS ARTICLE EXAMINES THE CURRENT experience and trends in the roles, functions, and activities of today's directors of large libraries or library systems. Directors assume an extensive range of complex responsibilities in their unique positions, foremost of which is accountability for internal organization, operations, and management. A shift in roles, functions, and activities is occurring, however, from predominantly internal affairs to an increasing emphasis on external concerns. These include technological, economic, and political issues.

### INTRODUCTION

Directing a large American library today is not what this author expected it would be thirty years ago. New information technologies and scholarly communication systems, the Internet, access issues, and intellectual property rights have made the library landscape more complex. Rising prices for scholarly journals, coupled with the sheer volume of published information, have caused major economic problems. Budget cutbacks and rising costs for human resources and facilities exacerbate the problems. Leadership expectations, external politics, demands for accountability and the compelling need for strong public relations, all belie the three decades-old foresight.

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## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In 1963, the author had just entered library school at Pratt Institute with an internship in the Brooklyn Public Library. Libraries then were still largely worlds of books and other printed material. Technology was just beginning to make an appearance. There were photocopy machines—the kind that used rolls of slick paper and cost 25 cents per copy—and photo-based circulation systems but not much else. Bush's (1945) visionary "memex" was still an intriguing, creative idea for dealing with the information explosion. Automated techniques were receiving increasing attention, but practical applications were yet to come; the machine-readable records pilot project (MARC) at the Library of Congress would not begin until 1966 (Avram, 1975). Holley (1972) had not written about the changes he detected in the "organization and administration of urban university libraries" (p. 175); McAnally and Downs (1973) had not produced their classic essay on the pressures affecting the roles of directors of university libraries. Libraries were then only on the threshold of a series of transitional periods which continue today, each with a shorter life-span than the last. But nearly fifteen years would pass before many writers would begin to seriously examine the changing and unique roles of directors in large libraries caused by changes in organization, management, technology, costs, and external politics.

Lee (1977) was one of the first to examine the pressures on academic library directors and the effect the pressures had on their administrative roles. A few years later, Metz (1979) looked at descriptive data to understand the actual roles of library directors, particularly external relationships. He concluded that internal library matters demanded more time and energy than external affairs.

Baughman (1980) inquired into the roles of metropolitan library directors, noting that more and more of their time was being required outside the demands of day-to-day operations and management. Moskowitz (1986) and Mech (1989, 1990) used Mintzberg's managerial role model in three different studies of the external and internal managerial roles of library directors. In keeping with Metz's conclusion, but somewhat contrary to Baughman's observations, Moskowitz and Mech concluded that library directors in both public and academic libraries were emphasizing their internal managerial roles over external environmental matters.

The work of Euster (1987), most notably her investigation of the role of academic library leaders, provides an important new role model. The model defines the roles of academic library directors in terms of influencing both the library's internal organization and its external environment.

The author's personal experience has followed a career path from a full-time entry-level professional position in 1965, through a department headship, to the directorship of a large undergraduate library, and then to senior line and staff positions. Library directorships at a private Association of Research Libraries (ARL) member and the University of Wyoming (UW), a land-grant institution, have placed the author in the mainstream of library transition and change. For example, the University of Wyoming has moved from the affluence of the late 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s into an era of resource constraints and greater public scrutiny and accountability. The University of Wyoming Libraries have become highly visible and attract significant public attention in both the state and the region. Increasingly difficult questions are being asked about library cost effectiveness, organizational efficiency, collections and access, the quality of services provided, the adequacy of facilities, the availability of new information technologies, the role of cooperation and resource sharing, and library leadership.

The UW experience, however, particularly in view of the institution's relatively recent commitment to build and develop a large academic research library, may not be easily generalized to other large libraries. This article, therefore, is based on additional experience from across the country. It reflects a selective contemporary look at the roles of directors in other large libraries and library systems. The nature of the inquiry for the study required an exploratory qualitative approach which describes the personal experience of library directors; it is self-selecting and situational, but the responses reflect roles which are probably common to most directors. The work is based on inquiries to ninety-one directors who have headed large libraries or library systems for at least five years. The directors surveyed were selected from the author's personal acquaintances within the ARL, the American Library Association (ALA), the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries (CARL), and the Greater Midwest Research Libraries Consortium (GMRLC); and participation in the ARL Office of Management Services Consultant Training Program and the University of California, Los Angeles/Council on Library Resources (UCLA/CLR) Senior Fellows program. Thirty directors responded, including public (eight), government (one), and academic (twenty-one).<sup>1</sup> Another six responded that their demanding roles and responsibilities precluded the time required to develop an adequate response to the inquiry.

The survey was focused on present positions and how they contrast with roles and responsibilities from five to ten years ago. Six questions were posed:

1. What are the functions and activities which command the majority of your time?

2. What factors determine the priorities on your time?
3. What managerial roles and activities internal to your library do you emphasize as a matter of priority and time commitment?
4. What external environmental factors (e.g., economic factors, institutional politics, technological changes, and so on) do you emphasize as a matter of priority and time commitment?
5. What functions and activities do you delegate to others?
6. How do your answers to these five questions compare with what you were doing five to ten years ago—i.e., what are you doing today that is different from what you were doing five to ten years ago?

### ASSUMPTIONS

The survey explored the general supposition that the roles of directors of large libraries or library systems are changing/have changed. The survey also looked at several supporting assumptions in view of the experience of the author and the respondents. These assumptions were:

- Roles have changed over the past five to ten years; shifts in priorities on functions and activities are occurring.
- Traditional managerial roles are still prevalent (situational internal library managerial functions and activities), but both internal library circumstances and external environmental factors are causing directors to spend more time now than in the past on matters external to day-to-day library organizational and operational responsibilities. The focus on external matters may include strategic planning correlated with broad environmental trends and events, interinstitutional cooperation and resource sharing, communication within consortiums and alliances, fund-raising and development, and professional association leadership.
- Directors spend more time today than they did five to ten years ago responding to societal shifts (e.g., lifelong learning trends, diversity issues, economic pressures, technological changes, increasing scrutiny of public institutions) and less time on local library-specific issues. Directors also spend more time attempting to envision, design, and deliver (speaking, writing, negotiating, and so on) strategic responses to the external environment.
- Directors spend more time today than they did five to ten years ago teaching and influencing staff and constituency regarding values, purpose, and direction of the library enterprise—communicating, delegating, building trust and confidence—and less time with hands-on program management matters.

What emerged from an analysis of the survey, completed fall 1993, was a collective point-of-view which generally validates the

author's personal experience and assumptions. The underlying general assumption was upheld: A shift in roles, functions, and activities is occurring from primarily internal managerial and organizational matters to increasing emphasis on external environmental concerns. While the subjectivity of this conclusion may be questioned, the real-life, context-sensitive experience of most of the directors who responded gives credibility to the assumptions.

### FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES COMMANDING THE MAJORITY OF A DIRECTOR'S TIME

The roles of directors of large libraries at any given time are characteristically driven by time-sensitive circumstances, such as personnel issues, organizational and operational demands, budget planning timetables, fund-raising initiatives, and new building construction. Being attentive to the needs of a well-oiled and functional organization is an essential role. The sentiment expressed by Kent Hendrickson at the University of Nebraska is shared by everyone else in the survey: "I will put coordination of library functions and organization at the top of my list," although he notes that senior officers run most of the day-to-day activities.

While directors may not be in daily contact with staff members, staying in touch was cited as a central role—almost as a cardinal rule. They described the responsibility variously as communicating, team building, and staff relations. Charles Robinson (Baltimore County Public Library) gave a unique response regarding the time-consuming role of communicating with staff, describing it as "internal consulting." The consultation role is essential in order for him to exercise his judgment as director:

Staff members who have ideas, projects, or crises which they determine (by experience) should come to my attention, discuss them with me. I say yes, no, let's do this instead, think about it, etc. It takes a lot of time, but that's what I'm primarily paid for: judgment.

The range of matters on which directors focus their attention, and most certainly on which they must use judgment, is extensive and complex. Sound judgment is critical since they hold ultimate responsibility for their libraries. The matters on which judgment is required include strategic planning and decision making—where to go with the organization; policy—guidelines for action; management—how to achieve strategic goals and objectives; directing—getting effective and efficient performance from the staff; budgeting—accounting and control; governance—dealing with the stakeholder, power relationships in and out of the library; facilities—

obtaining and maintaining adequate resources; personnel—developing, encouraging, and treating them fairly; and communicating and reporting—representing the library through formal reports, newsletters, and speeches.

In dealing with these and other matters, directors appear to have shaped their management roles, and their abilities to respond to the complex mix of responsibilities, on the basis of “what works for me.” The several schools of management thought (scientific, human relations, and decision theory), however, are reflected in the experience of the respondents. And several directors mentioned the influence of Total Quality Management (TQM) and “management by walking around” (MBWA) on their organization and management practices.

Another common role sentiment regarding internal operation matters came from Barbara Smith (Smithsonian Institution Library). Her comment is notable for its emphasis on the importance of effective delegation and the efficient use of communications technology:

The bulk of my time is spent responding to the pile of paper that comes across my desk daily. This involves reading, assigning to other staff to deal with, or responding myself. The “pile” now includes e-mail activity which keeps me informed and in contact with my immediate staff in ways that are more efficient than in the past. E-mail is now indispensable to an effective library operation.

E-mail is a new medium, however, and many directors are learning how to deal with it more effectively. Unlike written correspondence, with which directors have much experience and skill in managing, e-mail is not yet comfortable for everyone. The lament from Joanne Euster (University of California, Irvine) is typical of many directors: “So far I haven’t found a good way of dealing with e-mail, where everything seems to be of equal urgency.”

The role of participating in meetings of all kinds is reported as both essential and an annoyance. Behind the need to fulfill meeting obligations is a significant drain on time and energy. Nevertheless, directors reported significant opportunities to represent the library to constituents; articulate and communicate the library’s programs; work cooperatively with library staff, citizens, students, and faculty; build confidence, trust, and cooperation for the director’s vision and leadership; solve problems and develop consensus; influence planning and budgeting; coordinate staff delegated to specific tasks; and provide mentoring, counseling, and evaluation.

Even as directors attend to internal matters because of local circumstances, the impact of larger environmental factors (such as economics, politics, technology, and demographics)<sup>2</sup> on local library matters is causing directors to divert more and more attention to

external concerns. Time-sensitive internal library situations continue to command a high level of attention from most directors, but, with few exceptions, they reported that more time and energy is being invested away from running the day-to-day internal affairs of the library.

The most striking diversion of time and energy reported stems from increasing economic pressures. Directors are spending more time coping with declining budgets by reassessing priorities and working to complement traditional funding with other sources of financial support. They are constantly looking for ways to attract external funding, and they indicate that successful fund-raising programs require their attention, leadership, and direct participation. Edward Johnson (Oklahoma State University) concluded: "Perhaps as much as 20% of my time is devoted to fund raising and, as a result, I have to delegate more of the routine, daily administrative activities."

Rick Ashton (Denver Public Library) listed "fund-raising strategy, volunteer cultivation, and major related tasks" second only to his current management of a major \$73 million building project. Joan Chambers (Colorado State University) said: "I am much more involved in fund raising and cooperative/consortial relationships." Robert Croneberger (Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh) ranked "fund raising, fund-fighting, for money" after "coordination of staff delegated to tackle problems" and "long-range planning." Euster defined "external affairs, mostly fund raising or activities that might lead that way," as one of three categories which commands the majority of her time. Hendrickson reported, "I spend more and more of my time on development, including our Friends group...." David Hennington (Houston Public Library) reported a list of activities which command the majority of his time: "planning, community relations, governmental relations, finance, fund raising, communication with managers under my direct supervision, and grievance disposition." Gary Pitkin (Northern Colorado University) cited "fund-raising activities, including grant writing and establishing formal contacts with foundations, corporations and individuals," after his top priority of dealing with academic governance issues. Frank Rodgers (University of Miami) reported that "more and more (of my time) relates to fund-raising activities." Pat Woodrum (Tulsa City County Library) cited fund-raising following "planning" and "representing the Library locally, statewide and nationally."

A second major external role is defined variously as community relations, public relations, or "external presence," as Brice Hobrock (Kansas State University) calls it. While staff frequently do not understand the importance of these external activities, and may even

criticize the absence of the director or the way some responsibilities are delegated, directors reported the increasing importance of these external relations, functions, and activities. According to Hobrock:

All academic library directors must "represent" the interests of his/her library at multiple levels. We generally report to the Vice President or Provost, sit on the Council of Deans, and participate in a wide variety of campus and community activities that maintain the "presence" of our libraries—so we don't get left out when things are discussed or when the pie is divided. If we are not "out there," our libraries get dismissed as not being "players." The Rotary Club, the Wildcat Club, the President's Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the Country Club, are all things that we must do in various combinations in order to "represent" the best interests of our libraries. The external presence is increasingly necessary outside one's own university because of the growing need to borrow and share materials. Within one's own university system in a state, or in any regional grouping or national organization, it is necessary for directors to be a presence and, hopefully, to exert some leadership.

Directors of public libraries report similar sentiments. Annie Linnemeyer (Springfield-Greene County Library in Missouri), who also serves on a number of community boards and advisory groups, reports:

What commands most of my time is communication and, at this point, outside my institution. That means meeting with community groups to try to establish linkages with their activities—to get them to understand the role of the library in facilitating their own activities. I am trying to establish our institution as a central and essential function of this community.

Additional external functions and activities include extensive campus and community governance relationships and involvement with other outside professional responsibilities. William Potter (University of Georgia) responded:

The second greatest portion of my time (other than hands-on management) is spent working with librarians at other institutions, primarily in the Atlanta area but also throughout the state and region and through national organizations. The need for greater cooperation dictates that I spend time working with the directors of other libraries.

Sterling Albrecht (Brigham Young University) said:

A university librarian must fully understand all library procedures and how the library operates. Then the librarian must be the liaison to the university administration to interpret the library and all its complexities.



Building on a list from William Studer (Ohio State University), a typical inventory of functions and activities which command the majority of a director's time, both internally and externally, may look something like this:

- meetings of all kinds
- strategic planning, including goals, objectives, policies and priorities
- budget planning and management
- report writing
- program coordination and operations management, including collection development, public service, technology development
- personnel management, including staff development and motivation
- crisis management
- paperwork
- building projects and facilities management
- problem solving and exercising judgement
- communicating (reports, e-mail, telephone, correspondence, speeches, etc.)
- public relations or "external presence"
- liaison to the university, community or governmental authority
- fund raising and development
- consortium or alliance activities
- leadership for both local circumstances and professional associations
- professional service

#### FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE PRIORITIES ON A DIRECTOR'S TIME

Personal judgment is the factor which appears most prominently as the influence which affects a director's role. As Robinson said, judgment is why directors are paid. What is the most effective way to use available time? How will one get the most value for the time invested in any given activity? What needs to be done first? What functions and activities must rise to the top as priority in view of planning goals and objectives, crises and critical incidents, or deadlines and expectations? What time-sensitive local circumstances and situations must be addressed? What is the best balance between internal operations and management needs and external matters which require attention? What is the best way to allocate resources?

On the other hand, the roles of directors are not just characterized by uncertainty requiring decisions at every step. Richard Talbot (University of Massachusetts) represents the complementary side to the requirements for weighing, sorting, and judging:

There is a rhythm to much of what I do, what most of us do, I think. Partly, it's dictated by the budgetary cycle, partly by other kinds of cycles which are built in by the parent organization or which I adopt for myself. These include personnel reviews and periodic but deliberate organizational performance reviews. Of course, these cycles are punctuated by external demands or the need to respond to crises not of our own making. So while most of my time is focused on planning, it is different kinds of planning at different times. Sometimes it is largely budgetary. At other times it is personnel, technology, public relations, fund raising, etc.

The rhythms that Talbot feels are clearly felt by other directors. They include planning and budget timetables, promotion and tenure calendars, annual reports, construction schedules, and other scheduled commitments. The respondents, however, identified a variety of punctuated interruptions to the rhythms. Potter said: "I can plan about 75% of my time based on clearly stated goals and priorities for the library, and the other 25% of the time I am responding to unanticipated demands." Hobrock observed that "outside commitments and interruptions seem to take priority over day-to-day operations." Other interruptions cited by directors include emergencies, such as broken water pipes or library computer systems that crash, unexpected assignments from the parent institution or government agency, and issues which could have long-term consequences if not handled properly. David Walch (California Polytechnic State University) reflects the disposition of all directors when he observed that "serious matters are dealt with 'sooner than later' in order to resolve issues before they become more complex or problematic." These include requests from a provost or mayor which always take priority.

Issues with long-term consequences require a more deliberate long-term view, often having greater influence as factors which determine the priorities on a director's time. For example, the current economic and fiscal climate for most large libraries is causing a reassessment of how funding is appropriated to libraries. Budget cuts must be managed, and program downsizing is not uncommon. Information technologies are developing and becoming available faster than most libraries can implement them, and public pressure for the new technologies intensifies with each new product advertisement or popular press news story about present opportunities or visions of the future. The crisis with scholarly communication—electronic information access, serials costs and other information marketplace forces, intellectual property rights, access versus ownership, and the increased amount of published material available—is really many crises in a field in which a library is only

one player. Because of this, public and institutional information policy is becoming a significant issue which directors must face, and several directors reported their involvement in "information policy development."

Finally, directors reported a commitment to involvement in professional associations, consortiums, and alliances. Several directors noted the importance of "setting an example" or "setting the pace" for their staff members as well as the profession. Commitments made to providing professional leadership are important factors which determine the priorities on a director's time.

#### MANAGERIAL ROLES AND ACTIVITIES EMPHASIZED AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY AND TIME COMMITMENT

The responses to this question were remarkably consistent and are easily grouped into the following categories:

- communicating
- delegating
- managing personnel
- planning, budgeting and budget management
- setting policy and priorities
- evaluating and assessing programs
- managing impacts from external factors on internal operations
- monitoring technology developments
- managing change
- managing construction projects
- working directly with programs, notably collection development and public services

The necessity for effective communication is a self-imposed high priority responsibility for directors. Communicating through face-to-face conversation, correspondence, and e-mail is described universally as an essential managerial role. "Management by walking around" is also cited by several directors as an effective management style and a good way of staying in touch with the staff on a personal basis. Staff development, training, and mentoring are all emphasized as a matter of priority. Tom Mayer (Sno-Isle Regional Library System in Marysville, Washington) represents the concern directors have regarding effective communications:

Communicating effectively is one of my paramount activities, and one that I must constantly work to improve. I am learning to appreciate that many of our problems can be avoided or, at least, lessened, if I communicate more fully and clearly with board members, staff, patrons, city and county officials, and the media.

My goal is to spend some time every day consciously informing at least one person or group about the library.

Direct contact with staff, constituencies, and governing authorities contributes to the process of building consensus around programs and priorities and helps to assure staff support for directors. The consensus-building process is often reported to be demanding. Directors work at clearly and persistently articulating the library's vision, priorities, goals, and objectives. Like the influence of repetitive advertising, library staff members and clientele must hear the message about programs and priorities often to understand them and feel a part of the library enterprise. They must be given opportunities to ask questions—and directors know the importance of taking time to listen and respond with reasonable answers.

In any large organization with a plurality of values, opinions, knowledge, skills, abilities, personnel classifications and compensation rates, and job assignments, there will be conflicts. The need to spend time on conflict resolution was cited several times by respondents. While the conflict resolution skill may come naturally to some directors, others reported that they were trained in the task. Several directors observed that, because of various personnel policies, rules, regulations, and state and federal laws, they are required to set aside time for study to stay abreast of personnel management issues as well as professional trends and developments. Several directors explained the importance of building harmonious connections among employees in the various areas of library operations before conflicts occur. The strategy, of course, is to lessen the possibility of problems later on. They described meetings, memorandums, newsletters, open staff meetings, e-mail, committee work, task forces, open door policies, TQM, and MBWA all as effective methods to encourage positive staff interaction, organizational participation, and well-informed awareness and understanding.

Change is inevitable in large libraries, and it, too, can cause conflict. Most staff members are resistant to change brought about by such things as budget constraints, new program initiatives, reorganization, and new technologies. Directors reported that they are constantly aware of change occurring in their dynamic library environments (both internally and externally), and that spending time on managing the complexities of change is essential. They strive to understand the changes that are occurring or about to occur. They work to accommodate the organization for impending changes. They involve library staff and outside experts as necessary to plan for and implement change. They exercise judgment and make decisions based on the planning. They work to overcome staff uncertainties, anxieties,

and reluctance. And they strive to assure that proper evaluation and assessment of projects and programs will occur. This author has reported on a major experience with managing change at the University of Wyoming (Cottam & Stewart, 1991).

While conflict resolution and change management must be emphasized as necessary, directors also cited the importance of giving praise for staff performance and achievement. They explained that this function requires special time and attention through personal notes, formal recognitions, and personal contacts.

#### EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS EMPHASIZED AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY AND TIME COMMITMENT

Responding to technological change is almost a preoccupation for most directors. Nancy Eaton's experience at Iowa State University is representative of the roles and activities directors assume in the area:

I have stayed actively involved in national issues such as attending Coalition for Networked Information meetings and chairing the ARL Access Committee that is focusing on redesign of ILL and document delivery systems. The director of the Computation Center and I are partnering campus development in information technology, with the full support of the Provost and the deans. I have been principal investigator on several major national projects, such as the National Agricultural Text Digitizing Project and a current three-year, \$2.5 million federally funded biotechnology information management project.

Dale Cluff (Texas Tech University) said that "trying to keep up with technological changes" is second only to budgeting and fundraising issues. Marion Reid (California State University, San Marcos) noted that of all the external environmental factors, "I spend most of my time on technological change." And Potter expressed the general sentiment for all directors: "Formulating the library's response to technological change is something I consider to be extremely important. The future of the library is truly at stake in this area."

Technology is viewed as both an asset which can greatly enhance library resources and services, and a liability which can place considerable stress on already strained staff and budgets. Two responses, one from Roger Hanson (University of Utah) and the other from Raymond Gnat (Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library), describe the dilemma for most directors:

Technological change influences everything we do—at least it seems so. It also seems that funding for innovative information technologies is more easily available, but funds for maintaining traditional library activities are restrained. (Hanson)

Some of the biggest management challenges we face are with the implementation of automated library services at the same time we are faced with historically high usage of traditional library services. (Gnat)

As Cluff implied, this funding dilemma causes economic factors to rise high on the agendas for all directors. Thomas Shaughnessy (University of Minnesota) said that "attempting to stop the erosion of quality (services and collections) due to economic factors" is his major external commitment. Other directors reported they can no longer assume consistent economic trends or funding patterns. Fiscal and programmatic projections and forecasts are constantly upset by budget cuts. Costs for serials continue to rise and cause disruptive journal subscription cancellations, and increasing quantities of published material available in print and electronic formats magnify the fiscal problems. The demands for new information technologies force choices about allocating limited funds.

New information technologies, particularly, are causing radical shifts in budget allocations. Libraries must purchase equipment and software, install and implement automated systems, and train staff and clientele in the use of the new technologies in addition to supporting traditional library programs.

Efforts to cope with funding dilemmas are causing directors to consider new organizational models for delivering library and information services and different methods to fund them. External fund-raising through grants, corporations, and private donors is described by many directors as the most attractive option for additional funding, and fund-raising is a major new emphasis and priority on their time.

A third factor viewed as essential is the need to attend to institutional, community, state, and national politics, including legislation. The emphasis on this factor is frequently coupled with challenges related to technology and economics. Talbot observed:

I find that in a public institution it's difficult to untangle the economic from the political and the technological. As the chief librarian it falls to me to do most of the lobbying with external groups, library groups, faculty committees, the upper administration, the legislature, etc. All of these are political activities, but they are about obtaining the funding needed to maintain and preserve present activities and to secure the funding for technological change.

In addition to technological issues, economic problems, and political matters, some directors cited the following external concerns:

- networking, cooperation, resource sharing, consortium, and alliance relationships
- state and national library politics, including leadership
- interinstitutional relationships
- public relations, promotion, and developing a positive high-profile public visibility

## DELEGATION

Most directors reported placing emphasis on regular meetings and consultation with senior line and staff officers, and all directors emphasized applying the principle of delegation.

Judgment is again the key factor. Delegation appears to be a highly personal and preferential matter. "It depends," said Smith. Directors cite the delegation of technical and tactical matters; personnel management, except recruiting, communicating, mentoring and developing; vendor relationships; office management; and accounting. Euster represents the general views of most directors:

I delegate everything I can. I see delegation with direction as just about the only way of multiplying my time. I used to just work faster, then I worked faster and longer, then faster, longer, and technologically smarter, but however this plays out, you eventually reach the top of the curve where there just isn't any more personal productivity to be wrung out of the system. I tell certain of my staff (particularly my assistant—no longer just a secretary, my development officer, and my personnel officer) to act as extensions of me—get inside my head and think and act for me.

Another common sentiment was expressed by Mayer: "I delegate as much as possible to others in order to free up my time for external affairs."

Most directors reported the typical organizational practice of using a management team of line and staff officers. Some directors reported giving a relatively free hand to senior line officers, while working more closely with staff officers on such matters as personnel, technology, budgets, and collection development. Robert Migneault (University of New Mexico) described his use of a library management team: "I delegate—100 percent—to each and every member of the Library Management Team (LMT) the opportunity to be self-directed managers who manage for excellence, particularly in their respective areas of responsibility and influence."

## HOW ROLES, FUNCTIONS, AND ACTIVITIES HAVE CHANGED

Roles, functions, and activities have changed over the past five to ten years; however, there does not appear to be a consistent pattern

of change among the directors who responded. Traditional managerial roles are still prevalent. Talbot thinks his managerial style and the fundamental management functions and activities required to run a large library have not changed. He stated a sentiment shared by several other directors: "I don't think the fundamental functions have changed. What has changed is the environment and the objects of our attention, particularly the technological objects, but also a plethora of personnel, social, and economic issues."

Much of what directors do today is similar to what was done in the past. There is a cyclical pattern to life as a director. Talbot described a "rhythm" to what he does. The design of daily life includes such things as communicating through meetings, phone calls, correspondence, and now e-mail; writing reports and representing the library to the institution or local government; and fighting inflation and managing personnel, budgets, and buildings. In responding to these patterns, the directors reported that they gradually develop greater confidence in their leadership capacity, more reassurance about delegation, and increasing comfort with technology.

While most directors cited fund-raising as their major new emphasis, some reported a different experience. Potter observed that fund-raising has not yet become a major commitment, but when it does, "it might change my work patterns considerably." Marilyn Sharrow (University of California, Davis) reported:

The complexity of the job is greater as technology is rapidly changing and I must work more closely with other units on campus to interface various systems. Also, I am doing about five percent more development/fund raising (10 percent overall). Otherwise, I think the job of an ARL director is just as interesting, rewarding and fun now as it was when I started fourteen years ago.

Cluff explained that changes in his roles, functions, and activities have occurred in four major areas: fund-raising, journal cost increases and cancellations, consortium building, and legislative activities. George Shipman (University of Oregon) reported that his "advocacy" role has broadened far beyond just keeping the campus informed. Within this role, his fund-raising activities have also intensified:

Close coordination of the Library's increasingly complex programs is essential, but the world is being connected by information, and directors must become better *advocates*. The importance of my influence on information technology, public information policy, legislation, information economics, and institutional fund raising cannot be underestimated. Fund raising, for example, requires a key emphasis on promoting and advancing the Library's goals to help assure that funding is secured for our programs.



Donald Riggs's experience with shifting roles and responsibilities at the University of Michigan is characteristic of many of the respondents:

Today, as compared with 10 years ago, I am spending more time in cooperative projects..., investing more time in private fund raising, working closer with computer personnel, focusing more on getting grants, fostering the principles of total quality management..., committing more resources to cultural diversity..., spending more time on the management of change, and taking a greater leadership role in the globalization of knowledge (recently I appointed a Project Director for International Initiatives).

Most directors also observed how much more outside work they are now doing which confirms the assumption that directors are spending more time now than in the past on matters external to day-to-day library organizational and operational matters. The focus on strategic planning correlated with environmental issues and trends is more intense. Fund-raising and development have emerged as essential priority activities. Interinstitutional cooperation and resource sharing, communication within consortiums and alliances, and professional leadership all now require more time and commitment.

Directors also reported that they are feeling greater effects from societal shifts. The focus on cultural diversity has raised important questions about cultivating external relationships, building bridges of understanding, and recruiting and developing a staff that reflects the diversity of society. Lifelong learning trends have strongly suggested the need to extend library resources through cooperation with distance education providers. Public demand for higher levels of quality performance and greater accountability require closer collaboration with parent institutions and governmental agencies outside the library to assure effective responses. The needs for leadership beyond the library—on the campus, in the community, in the state, and nationally—may be difficult to meet, but they must be addressed by today's directors.

Finally, a few directors confirmed that they are teaching and influencing the values of library staff and constituencies regarding the purpose of the library. Migneault's view is representative of the directors who raised the issue:

I am spending more time trying to mentor and influence others to value our approach to management, and to accept and foster pedagogical responsibilities as integral parts of the academic research library mission; that is, to value lifelong learning skills, including learning how to learn while utilizing the library and emerging information technologies.

The trust and confidence directors are able to build in their leadership will be dependent on their abilities to respond to external environmental factors, influence societal values about libraries, and adopt emerging information technologies, as well as to manage internal library resources.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Respondents to the survey and dates of responses are: Albrecht, Sterling J. (Brigham Young University Library), 15 September 1993  
 Ashton, Rick J. (Denver Public Library), 24 August 1993  
 Chambers, Joan (Colorado State University Libraries), 16 September 1993  
 Cluff, E. Dale (Texas Tech University Libraries), 25 August 1993  
 Croneberger, Robert B. (The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh), 3 November 1993  
 Eaton, Nancy L. (Iowa State University Library), 20 September 1993  
 Euster, Joanne (University of California Library, Irvine), 14 September 1993  
 Gnat, Raymond E. (Indianapolis—Marion County Public Library), 5 October 1993  
 Hanson, Roger K. (University of Utah Libraries), 19 October 1993  
 Hendrickson, Kent (University of Nebraska Libraries, Lincoln), 27 August 1993  
 Henington, David M. (Houston Public Library), 15 October 1993  
 Hobrock, Brice G. (Kansas State University Libraries), 31 August 1993  
 Johnson, Edward R. (Oklahoma State University Libraries), 14 October 1993  
 Linnemeyer, Annie (Springfield—Greene County Library), 1 November 1993  
 Mayer, Tom (Sno-Isle Regional Library System), 16 September 1993  
 Migneault, Robert L. (University of New Mexico Libraries), 7 November 1993  
 Pitkin, Gary M. (University of Northern Colorado Libraries), 30 August 1993  
 Potter, William Gray (University of Georgia Libraries), 2 September 1993  
 Reid, Marion T. (California State University Libraries, San Marcos), 13 September 1993  
 Riggs, Donald E. (University of Michigan Library), 12 September 1993  
 Robinson, Charles W. (Baltimore County Public Library), 30 August 1993  
 Rodgers, Frank (University of Miami Libraries), 13 September 1993  
 Sharrow, Marilyn J. (University of California Library, Davis), 2 September 1993  
 Shaughnessy, Thomas W. (University of Minnesota Libraries), 26 October 1993  
 Shipman, George W. (University of Oregon Library), 8 November 1993  
 Smith, Barbara J. (Smithsonian Institution Libraries), 19 October 1993  
 Studer, William J. (Ohio State University Libraries), 13 September 1993  
 Talbot, Richard (University of Massachusetts Libraries), 31 August 1993  
 Walch, David B. (California Polytechnic State University Library), 13 September 1993  
 Woodrum, Pat (Tulsa City-County Library System), 12 October 1993
- <sup>2</sup> For an annotated list of the environmental trends affecting academic libraries, see the report of the environmental trends scan project conducted by the Association of College and Research Libraries in Hughes, C., & Pfannenstiel, W. (1993). Practical visioning for the decade of austerity. *College & Research Libraries News*, 54(1), 21-24.

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