

***What do I envision as the role of academic libraries in the coming decade and how do I see reference, collection development, library instruction and government publications being involved in achieving this role?***

Presentation given at the University of Colorado Aurora Campus Library, Denver Colorado, Spring 1999.

**Introduction:**

- Thank you for invitation
- I am thrilled to be here.
- Denver one of few places I would consider moving to.
- Have been here briefly a couple of times, but have known Camila Alire , Orlando and Ellen through work in ALA.

**My background:**

- Tucson home most of my life.
- My parents born in small mining towns of Superior and Jerome. Family of miners.
- Mom's side native to Arizona/Sonora region indigenous tribes Opata, Mayo, Apache, Spanish and French.
- My Dad's father was a Spanish immigrant from Asturias. His mother, also Spanish was raised in the state of Zacatecas Mexico.

**My resume:**

- I've worked most of my life:
- as a carryout/ cashier in a grocery store while going to high school and college.
- Gained good deal of public service experience.
- Attended UA w/BA in Psychology
- Dabbled in community radio and acting in a community theatre troupe before obtaining Masters in Library Science
- Nogales Santa Cruz Public Library in Az. as a children's librarian
- University of Michigan Undergraduate Library as a reference and

instruction librarian

- Areas of scholarly interest include collection development, education, human resources, organization systems, staff development and diversity

### **While at Arizona:**

- UA is a major research one institution and the Library is in the top 30 of ARL libraries, with strong collections and reputation for innovation. Especially known for its team based framework.
- University of Arizona as Assistant to the Dean for Staff Development, Recruitment and Diversity 6.5 yrs.
- Within two months of my arrival, I participated in a massive organizational change process
- My role was to coordinate training for this process and to build a multicultural organization.
- Have been work team leader for the Staff and Organization Systems team for over a year
- Oversee recruitment and other hr functions, staff development and training, diversity programming and other related work.
- The only constant is constant change.

### **5 years later, we now work in**

- team based,
- diverse,
- future oriented organization
- moving toward digital environment
- high levels of involvement in scholarly communication issues, faculty partnerships and knowledge management.

### **Role of academic libraries in coming decade:**

- Being a member of the Library's leadership group and on SLRP has helped to raise my awareness of issues that academic libraries are and will continue to confront.
- Predicting the future is a risky business

- look at environment, statistical and social trends and make predictions based on that information.

### **Technology is a key driver of current need for change:**

- new generations of software and hardware almost annually
- competition from private sector for provision of information services because technology has made it possible for others to access and package information i.e.// WWW and internet
- digital publishing and digitization of collections
- alternative methods of scholarly communication being developed in response to high prices charged by commercial publishers
- technology haves and have nots: gap is increasing?
- home computers commonplace in many American households
- technological innovations are changing the way professors teach : use of media in classroom and distance education
- integration of information technology units with libraries... will this continue?
- Is the MLS a thing of the past. Look at Berkeley.

### **Resources:**

- decreasing resources and rising costs esp. serials
- There are fewer dollars and more calls for fiscal responsibility and accountability
- lots is still being published in lots of formats, books, digital other media

### **Human Systems:**

- more libraries are experimenting with teams
- trend towards flattening organizations to make them more cost effective.
- diversification of American society, more minorities becoming members of the middle class
- Are we prepared to work with diverse populations

### **What Libraries in general will need to do:**

#### **People:**

- embrace and promote diversity in all of its aspects: Build multicultural organizations that reflect the diversity of our society

- embrace the philosophy of being a learning organization: everyone has to learn and change
- Customer focus has to increase in importance because we are no longer the only game in town.
- Very important to ensure equity of access
- career staff will become more important
- there will be a need for increased collegiality and cooperation between career staff and professional staff.

### **Tools:**

- be clear about vision and mission and values. These are valuable tools that when in place and practiced and understood guide making difficult decisions
- Do strategic planning: important to be ready for change and to do things that will ensure success in the future
- Important not to be frightened by technology, but to see it for what it is: tools that make our work easier.
- online ordering and billing
- technology a continual financial drain, but its a critical investment and has and will continue to replace traditional methods of doing work.

### **Tasks:**

- decide access vs. ownership, given funding picture and mission of library.
- working smarter through use of process improvement, teams, and development of systems that are flexible and future oriented.
- fewer staff doing traditional work like cataloging, ordering, processing.
- more outsourcing will occur. Its more cost effective.
- Skills librarians have traditionally developed will continue to be important: subject expertise, teaching skills especially. –these need to expand to include other high level skills like knowledge management
- more involvement needed in teaching, working with faculty on integrating information literacy into the curriculum.
- process improvement
- needs assessment
- data collection, management and analysis

## **Collections:**

- decide access vs. ownership
- Can you have both? Is there space?
- Combination of print and electronic sources of information
- availability of digital collections on the rise rapidly
- increased reliance on shared resource arrangements
- electronic journals
- electronic ordering
- need to fight inflation of serials
- make unique collections accessible.

## **Instruction:**

- increased role in partnering with faculty
- need for librarians as teachers helping students with information literacy
- librarians must claim their niche
- more teaching better skills

## **Government documents:**

- lots of materials available on web and cdrom
- need to work with other local libraries to ensure accessibility to documents
- make access more user friendly
- Can they be found in the online catalog with other materials by subject?

## **Reference:**

- librarians expertise needed more than ever to help users acquire information literacy skills
- need to train staff to do this work so that librarians can get into the classroom and work with faculty
- librarians need to continue developing subject expertise to work with faculty and graduate students.
- need for reference won't go away even if users don't think they need help

## **Role of Academic Libraries overall:**

- Academic Libraries are at a critical juncture in their evolution.
- We need to assert our importance and re-define our roles on campus
- The Library should always be seen as a place where Learning occurs.
- Librarians and staff of library need to be key players on campus, providing instruction and working with faculty to integrate technology into the curriculum.
- Can the Library still be the heart of the University? Is it still possible to be the point of intersection on campus where all disciplines converge? If we are to continue to exist it is vital to assert ourselves and become more involved in the teaching enterprise, in the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom.