Leading libraries
Leading in uncertain times: a literature review

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Foreword

In 2016 SCONUL established a Leadership Task and Finish Group to develop a range of initiatives to enhance the collective leadership capacity across SCONUL and to support individuals and groups of staff in member institutions in their leadership development.

At an early stage of this project we identified the value of an approach that supports reflections on leadership and assists academic library directors in gaining personal reach and strategic influence within their organisations and to guide the planning of their leadership development. The work is underpinned by various pieces of research including this literature review on leading in uncertain times and an investigation into the perspectives of executive-level leadership in UK Universities reported in, ‘The view from above’. The work was scoped by a subgroup led by Jane Savidge (University of Southampton), and Roisin Gwyer (University of Portsmouth), and assisted by Michelle Anderson (University of Hull), and Jan Conway (University of the Creative Arts). This focused on two main research questions:

• What strategies can library leaders employ to ‘lead in uncertain times’? i.e. which approaches to leadership are needed in the context of continuous and rapid organisation, legislative, and technological change?

• What are the views of university senior leaders about academic library leadership and culture?

SCONUL commissioned consultants Professor David Baker and Alison Allden OBE to conduct this research which is published by SCONUL in two separate reports\(^1\). A further, related report which explores the international perspective contains a digest of a small sample of interviews with directors who have experience of working at leadership level in the UK and abroad\(^2\).

This report comprises the literature review carried out by the consultants. The result is a comprehensive and thorough resource for established library leaders within the SCONUL community and a useful tool to guide the reading and personal development of new and aspiring academic library leaders.

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The review is structured so that there are different ways to draw on it as a resource, for example by theme. While the annotated bibliography in itself is interesting reading, a useful starting point might be the ‘top ten’ or key readings identified. Where applicable, the review includes reading suggested by the executive level leaders who were interviewed as part of the research. Many of these leaders stressed the importance of keeping informed and up to date with key developments in the sector. The literature review collates a range of essential sources of this type of sector knowledge, including relevant organisations and mission groups, publications, and the trends reports that are deemed to be requisite reading in the area.

We are grateful to David Baker and Alison Allden for their thorough and systematic approach to the literature review and their commitment overall to the research project.

I would like also to acknowledge the support from Ann Rossiter, Executive Director of SCONUL, the SCONUL Board, and the work of the members of the Leadership Task and Finish Group, in particular Jane Savidge and Roisin Gwyer, in shaping and directing the project.

Alison Baud
Director of Library & Learning Services, Bath Spa University
Chair, SCONUL Leadership Task and Finish Group 2016–17
October 2017
Authors’ introduction

1. Introduction

This literature review has been carried out by David Baker and Alison Allden as part of the consultancy work commissioned and overseen by the Leadership Task and Finish Group. The strand of work aims:

...to identify practical approaches found useful by existing HE library leaders in positioning the academic library for maximum strategic impact within their specific institutions and to support agility in the face of change. This think-piece is intended to provide a body of evidence and a theoretical basis for reflection.

2. Approach

The literature searching took as its starting point the two research questions (see below), the example entries for the bibliography suggested by Leadership Task and Finish Group (LFTG) members, and Roisin Gwyer’s paper3. Given that much of the relevant literature has already been analysed and synthesised by David Baker in his recent work in the field, especially in relation to strategies for ‘leading in uncertain times’, his recent published outputs were also analysed at an early stage in the searching process4.

A broad range of information sources from a wide variety of sectors was covered, alongside the focus on higher education in general and academic librarianship in particular. Specific organisations’ outputs were surveyed and included: the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), Jisc, the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, and SCONUL. While the emphasis is on literature produced within the last ten years, older sources have been included where deemed significant. The literature review has been ‘road tested’ at several points to ensure maximum value and clarity.

3  Gwyer, R. (2010). Leading in difficult times: what can we learn from the literature? Available from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13614571003712321

3. The themes

The literature review aims to address two distinct research questions:

What strategies can library leaders employ to ‘lead in uncertain times’? i.e. effective approaches to leadership in the context of continuous and rapid organisational, legislative, and technological change.

What views do university senior leaders hold or express about academic library leadership and culture, i.e. what is the view of the library and its strategic position from those at university senior leadership level – the ‘view from above’?

We have organised the results of the literature searches into four broad categories: personal leadership; change management; broader organisation; and personal development. Material in each of these sections is subdivided into key areas, as informed by the analysis of interviews with strategic leaders conducted as part of a related piece of research for SCONUL ‘Leading libraries: The view from above’ and by discussions with subgroup members. There is inevitably some overlap between the sections and sub-sections. The fifth section – sector knowledge – gives details of the various sources recommended by the strategic leaders interviewed as part of the associated research.

4. Organisation of the Literature Review

The first part of the review is a ‘top ten’ list of key titles chosen from the literature review by the Task Group members. The second part of the review provides themed lists of the literature identified. The third part contains the annotated entries, in alphabetical order.

5. Acknowledgements

In producing this review, we are grateful to Roisin Gwyer and Jane Savidge, subgroup members for their feedback and advice; also to all who suggested material for the review, including those interviewed for the second part of the think-piece and colleagues who provided many suggestions for additions and improvements.

David Baker and Alison Allden, May 2017

Part I: Key titles

N.B. The titles are hyperlinked to Part III, the Annotated bibliography

Within the Review, the Steering Group identified the following titles as essential reading:


Garmer, A. (2016). Libraries in the Exponential Age: Moving from the Edge of Innovation to the Center of Community


Hendrix, D. (2013). Emotional Intelligence and the Winds of Change in Academic Libraries


Nayar, V. (2010). Employees First, Customers Second

Part II: Key themes

N.B. The titles in Sections 1-4 are hyperlinked to Part III, the Annotated bibliography

1. Personal leadership

Advocacy
Munn, R. (1968). The Bottomless Pit, or the Academic Library as Viewed from the Administration Building
SCONUL. (2016). Leadership Challenges. Some Views from Those in the Hot Seat

Experimentation, success, failure, risk-taking

Leadership
Castiglione, J. (2006). Organizational Learning and Transformational Leadership in the Library Environment
Dewey, B.I. (2014). Leading the Library by Leading the Campus: A Dean’s Perspective
Leading in uncertain times: a literature review


SCONUL. (2016). Leadership Challenges. Some Views from Those in the Hot Seat

Shepstone, C. & Currie, L. (2008). Transforming the Academic Library: Creating an Organizational Culture that Fosters Staff Success


People management


Ptolomey, J. (2007). Transformational or Transactional?


Shepstone, C. & Currie, L. (2008). Transforming the Academic Library: Creating an Organizational Culture that Fosters Staff Success
2. Change management

Managing change

Crawley-Low, J. (2013). The Impact of Leadership Development on the Organizational Culture of a Canadian Academic Library


Gwyer, R. (2010). Leading in Difficult Times: What Can We Learn from the Literature?

Hendrix, D. (2013). Emotional Intelligence and the Winds of Change in Academic Libraries


Partridge, H., Lee, J. & Munro, C. (2010). Becoming “Librarian 2.0”: The Skills, Knowledge and Attributes Required by Library and Information Science Professionals in a Web 2.0 World (and Beyond)

Ptolomey, J. (2007). Transformational or Transactional?


Communication


Nayar, V. (2010). Employees First, Customers Second


Digital learning


Garmer, A. (2016). Libraries in the Exponential Age: Moving from the Edge of Innovation to the Center of Community


Environment


Crawley-Low, J. (2013). The Impact of Leadership Development on the Organizational Culture of a Canadian Academic Library


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Ptolomey, J. (2007). Transformational or Transactional?


Shepstone, C. & Currie, L. (2008). Transforming the Academic Library: Creating an Organizational Culture that Fosters Staff Success


Innovation


Garmer, A. (2016). Libraries in the Exponential Age: Moving from the Edge of Innovation to the Center of Community


Partridge, H., Lee, J., & Munro, C. (2010). Becoming “Librarian 2.0”: The Skills, Knowledge and Attributes Required by Library and Information Science Professionals in a Web 2.0 World (and Beyond)
Libraries – transition


Castiglione, J. (2006). Organizational Learning and Transformational Leadership in the Library Environment


Hendrix, D. (2013). Emotional Intelligence and the Winds of Change in Academic Libraries


Partridge, H., Lee, J., & Munro, C. (2010). Becoming “Librarian 2.0”: The Skills, Knowledge, and Attributes Required by Library and Information Science Professionals in a Web 2.0 World (and Beyond)

Ptolomey, J. (2007). Transformational or Transactional?

Users


Nayar, V. (2010). Employees First, Customers Second

SCONUL. (2016). Leadership Challenges. Some Views From Those in the Hot Seat

3. Broader organisation

General


Munn, R. (1968). The Bottomless Pit, or the Academic Library as Viewed From the Administration Building


SCONUL. (2016). Leadership Challenges. Some Views From Those in the Hot Seat


Challenges to UKHE


Competition


Cultures and environments


Dewey, B.I. (2014). Leading the Library by Leading the Campus: A Dean’s Perspective

SCONUL. (2016). Leadership Challenges. Some Views From Those in the Hot Seat


Libraries – roles


Crawley-Low, J. (2013). The Impact of Leadership Development on the Organizational Culture of a Canadian Academic Library

Garmer, A. (2016). Libraries in the Exponential Age: Moving from the Edge of Innovation to the Center of Community


SCONUL. (2016). Leadership Challenges. Some Views From Those in the Hot Seat

Organisational structures


Castiglione, J. (2006). Organizational Learning and Transformational Leadership in the Library Environment

CILIP. (2016). Qualified Library and Information Professionals in Further Education – Case for Support

Dewey, B.I. (2014). Leading the Library by Leading the Campus: A Dean’s Perspective

Garmer, A. (2016). Libraries in the Exponential Age: Moving from the Edge of Innovation to the Center of Community

Gwyer, R. (2010). Leading in Difficult Times: What can we learn from the Literature?

Hendrix, D. (2013). Emotional Intelligence and the Winds of Change in Academic Libraries


Nayar, V. (2010). Employees First, Customers Second

Shattock, M. (2010). Managing Successful Universities (2nd Ed.)

Resource allocation


Munn, R. (1968). The Bottomless Pit, or the Academic Library as Viewed From the Administration Building

SCONUL. (2016). Leadership Challenges. Some Views From Those in the Hot Seat


Technology development


Garmer, A. (2016). Libraries in the Exponential Age: Moving from the Edge of Innovation to the Center of Community


4. Personal development

Career and skills development


CILIP. (2016). Qualified Library and Information Professionals in Further Education – Case for Support


Partridge, H., Lee, J., & Munro, C. (2010). Becoming “Librarian 2.0”: The Skills, Knowledge and Attributes Required by Library and Information Science Professionals in a Web 2.0 World (and Beyond)


Leadership development


CILIP. (2016). Qualified Library and Information Professionals in Further Education - Case for Support

Crawley-Low, J. (2013). The Impact of Leadership Development on the Organizational Culture of a Canadian Academic Library


Gwyer, R. (2010). Leading in Difficult Times: What Can We Learn From the Literature?


Ptolomey, J. (2007). Transformational or Transactional?


Williamson, V. (2009). Developing Leadership to Transform Our Library: The Library Leadership Development Program (LLDP) at the University of Saskatchewan
5. Sector knowledge

**ACRL Research and Planning Committee**


The ACRL Research and Planning Committee releases a top trends report on a bi-annual basis which reviews trends and issues within academic libraries. The 2016 report discussed topics such as professional development, increasing digital trends, an analysis of performance-based learning, as well as the changing direction of higher education, and therefore changing framework, with an increasing alignment to digital innovations.

**Chartered Management Institute (CMI)**

http://www.managers.org.uk

The CMI started life as the British Institute of Management over 60 years ago, offering the UK’s first diploma in management studies. Since then, it has grown to become the only chartered professional body in the UK dedicated to promoting the highest standards in management and leadership excellence. It now offers an array of management and leadership qualifications at various levels, through to chartered membership, delivering on the vision to have better led and managed organisations. The CMI is also at the forefront of governance, research, and policy issues, often writing in-depth articles and papers on topics affecting leadership and management, collaborating with both private and public organisations.

**EDUCAUSE**

http://www.educause.edu

EDUCAUSE is a non-profit association whose mission is to advance higher education through the use of information technology. While EDUCAUSE is predominantly US focused, just over 10% of its membership base is international. It is open to corporate institutions, and provides programmes and resources for higher education institutions that are focused on knowledge creation and dissemination; collaboration and community; analysis and advocacy; career and leadership development and
experimentation. EDUCAUSE self-publishes a number of articles and books pertaining to higher education technology and policy. It maintains a vast library of material on similar topics, which is accessible to its members. EDUCAUSE also holds various seminars, conferences, and events focusing on higher education and technology throughout the year as well as a number of management and leadership training programmes and workshops.

GuildHE
http://www.guildhe.ac.uk

GuildHE is one of the two recognised representative bodies for higher education in the UK. The vision is one of diversity and inclusion, leading to a stronger, more distinctive HE sector in the UK. GuildHE provides advice and advocacy to members on topics around HE and policies / regulatory changes through both networking events, articles and publications.

Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI)
http://www.hepi.ac.uk

HEPI is the UK’s only independent think-tank devoted to higher education. It aims to help shape UK HE policy debate through evidence, and regularly publishes a number of articles and reports following research on various aspects of HE policy and the sector as a whole. It also holds a number of paid events and lectures from distinguished figures within both the UK and international HE arenas.

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Trends Report
https://trends.ifla.org

IFLA produced a report detailing high-level trends that affect future information environments in libraries and academic institutions in an international environment. It based its research on previous literature as well as input from key figures in the sector. It also identifies potential roadblocks within the library sector that affect the future role and identity of libraries.
Ithaka Survey

http://www.sr.ithaka.org/publications

Ithaka S+R provides research and strategic guidance to help the academic community navigate economic and technological change, working on innovation that enables greater access to higher education, improving student outcomes whilst controlling cost. It also publishes a number of articles on the topic, including surveys across the industry, focusing on areas such as policy, funding, technology, and leadership issues.

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com

Billed as ‘the world’s professional network’, LinkedIn is a professional social networking site with over 500 million members in over 200 countries worldwide. It has recently been acquired by Microsoft and has rapid expansion plans. LinkedIn allows its members, both individually and as organisations, to create articles and posts linking to external sources. LinkedIn also allows the creation of professional groups with the option of an email update to members, listing articles relevant to that specific group. LinkedIn has also partnered with Lynda to offer learning resources and has the ability to post and search for jobs.

New Media Consortium (NMC)

http://www.nmc.org

The NMC is an international community of experts in educational technology helping shape the future of learning through research by making it more relevant and engaging. The NMC aims to drive innovation by carrying out research that catalyses discussion, by convening people around new ideas, and by building communities that encourage exploration and experimentation. It also has a growing and influential role on the global stage, working with leading organisations around the world to move current education models to forms that are more engaging, effective, and inclusive. The NMC regularly produces research (notably Horizon Reports) which discusses emerging technologies and their implications. It runs a number of events around key themes, including conferences, workshops, and an annual award ceremony.
NMC Horizon Report – Library Edition

As part of the Horizon Project, NMC has produced a specific report on academic and research libraries which discusses the key topics and themes for the next five years. It includes technological trends and developments that are likely to drive transformation. It discusses the unique challenges that are faced by academic libraries and the strategies for solutions, and outlines six key themes that are due to peak in the next few years. The report calls itself ‘a reference and technology planning guide for librarians, library leaders, library staff, policymakers, and technologists’.

NMC Horizon Report – HE Edition

As part of the Horizon Project, NMC has produced a specific report on higher education in conjunction with EDUCAUSE. It identifies and describes emerging technologies likely to have an impact on learning, teaching, and creative inquiry in education as well as other key trends and unique challenges that higher education is likely to face over the next five years. It discusses the impact of emerging technology within higher education institutions, and their strategic missions. The report calls itself ‘a reference and straightforward technology-planning guide for educators, higher education leaders, administrators, policymakers, and technologists’.

Times Higher Education (THE)
https://www.timeshighereducation.com

Times Higher Education is a weekly publication focusing on higher education issues and is generally regarded as a leading publication in the field. Since 2009, it has compiled the world-renowned table for university rankings. It contains a career section for sector-specific jobs, and provides data and analysis on higher education trends to organisations the world over.
Universities UK
http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk

Universities UK markets itself as ‘the voice of universities, helping to maintain the world-leading strength of the UK university sector’. Members consist of vice-chancellors and executive heads of UK universities, and the organisation gives advice to members on a wide range of topics such as advocacy and representation, research and analysis, and general information and advice. It holds numerous events and conferences throughout the year which provide updates and discussion around key themes in the HE sector. Universities UK also provides research and analysis documentation on a number of topics, focusing on their effect in higher education. It has close ties with government and currently sits on the All-Party Parliamentary University Group. It has previously contributed to various white papers, and has a keen interest in regulatory policies and change.

University mission groups

Russell Group
http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk

Often billed as the ‘Ivy League’ of British universities, the aims and objectives of the Russell Group are to promote the interests of universities in which teaching and learning are undertaken within a culture of research excellence, and to identify and disseminate new thinking and ideas about the organisation and management of such institutions. The Russell Group ensures that policy development across a wide range of higher education issues is underpinned by a robust evidence base and regularly submits evidence to the government, the European Parliament, and other public bodies working on policy and regulatory issues. It also undertakes research and publishes its findings on these issues as a point of reference.

Million Plus
http://www.millionplus.ac.uk

Million Plus is made up of 19 post-1992 universities and has similar aims and objectives to other university mission groups. It is often involved in the political
debate about the role and contribution of universities to the economy and society, and engages with government white papers and policy reform. It undertakes its own research and publishes its findings on various topics affecting the higher education sector.

University Alliance

http://www.unialliance.ac.uk

The members of University Alliance are UK universities that hold a more ‘business engaged’ outlook, with the organisation aiming to drive growth and innovation at a local level, through research, teaching, and SME activity. The focus of the group discussion is on emerging issues in HE. It has also put forward research and proposals to government, most recently relating to accelerated degree programmes and lifelong learning. It publishes its research and analysis, and holds various conferences and events throughout the year.

WonkHE

http://wonkhe.com

WonkHE is a private-sector company which focuses on policy, people, and politics within the HE sector. Their main outputs are daily and weekly newsletters covering developments within the HE arena, including analysis. WonkHE also maintains an events page which details events specific to the HE sector, and a sector-specific job board.
Part III: Librarians and leadership: an annotated bibliography


The NMC report highlights both short-term and long-term challenges to the UK HE sector around technological advances, highlighting their potential repercussions over the next five years. One constant challenge is the ‘competition of new models in education’ – specifically in terms of academic libraries. ‘New models in education’ could mean the ever-increasing methods that people use to access information. This ties in with the six themes identified in the report. Expanding access and convenience is worth noting (briefly referred to in a library-specific context in point twelve). Spurring innovation is also key: to achieve innovation, a critical change needs to occur in the mind-set of librarians and indeed in institutional management, where there is often an undervaluing of the importance of the library’s role as a vehicle which can help create innovation not only within the library itself but also outside it. Spreading digital learning is a key future role for libraries; the report argues that, as utilised in everyday life, digital technologies can become dangerous or ineffective if they are not integrated into the learning process correctly.

To foster innovation, experimentation and even failure must occur; but failure is not generally seen as an option by library staff or senior university management, due primarily to budget constraints, but also to traditional aversion to risk-taking. ‘To keep pace, institutions must critically assess their curriculum and implement changes to their evaluation methods… to remove barriers that limit the development of new ideas’ – in other words, assessment of libraries’ own procedures and management views need to be undertaken, and potentially changed, to tolerate failure, ultimately resulting in innovation. The report calls for practices that better finance initiatives for innovation. In the current climate, this will only be achievable if institutional budgets put the library to the forefront of allocation. This means a rethink of the roles of educators; in a library context, this could be applied to the role of the library itself, and to that of librarians.

The book explores the unique position of academic librarianship as a profession, and contains comprehensive recommendations to further a career within the profession, including giving a detailed illustration of political and environmental challenges, and how to embrace the same to best effect. It covers numerous topics such as: teaching faculty roles, campus governance, curriculum, the student body, collection development, providing quality service, funding, facilities, staff, technology, and IT support, giving detailed guidance on challenges in each, and concludes by detailing views of other experienced professionals (including senior leadership teams) as to the future of the profession.


Written by the Dean of University Libraries at the University of New Mexico, this report draws on her own experience. Already undertaking advocacy at federal and state level, she asserts that this is not sufficient – advocacy should start from a grass roots level, and come from those within the library, addressing senior institutional leaders. The grass roots level can be more effective, as championing is being done by those who are more aware of issues and the needs of stakeholders. But many do not feel confident in undertaking such activities as they feel that they do not have sufficient skills to do so effectively; library leaders need not only to equip staff with the persuasion skills to be effective communicators, but also to provide them with a clear, systematic plan on which they can build their advocacy, ensuring that it is easily communicated and understood by all.


The paper explores the direction of the profession, and addresses the challenges of leadership, notably the lack of talent wishing to progress into such positions. Librarians who attend professional leadership seminars and workshops were more willing to progress their careers into leadership and management roles (although, that said, one could argue that the types of people who attend such events may be more predisposed in such direction). The paper also addresses the value of mentoring to ensure that future leaders are equipped with
the skills and capability to lead successfully. While the paper only focuses on a small sample, it highlights not only the need for more talent, but also the gender imbalance within the profession (75% of those surveyed were female). Ultimately, it concludes by suggesting that library leaders need to encourage librarians at all levels to develop their leadership potential in a bid to ensure the profession survives.


Baker’s text draws conclusions from a wide range of texts and research carried out by both himself and other authors, primarily on the transition of libraries becoming ever more digitally focused. Baker argues that innovation and change is driven both by economic need as well as technological advances which in turn fulfil end-user requirements. Arguments are put forward that libraries need to be mindful of the user and adapt accordingly, but also consider economic pressures and the limited resources available. Innovation is not always a clear cut, step by step process, but more of a continuous learning curve, especially considering the rate of advancement with technology. The product or service may not be realised or tangible until towards the end of the initial innovation cycle; small incremental steps may be taken and it is the cumulative effect of those steps that delivers the product / service and drives change. Jisc and eLib projects are used as exemplars.

To survive, libraries need to move beyond the traditional services offered, and play a key role in analysing trends and evaluating needs so that services can be provided accordingly. Users are only one element that needs to be considered; technology is the other, and a balance between the demands of end users and the advancements, availability and provision of technology needs to be struck. Users are at liberty to pick and choose (and indeed change) their requirements and the delivery method of their needs at any point, and as such libraries need to be adept at offering services fulfilling different requirements via different delivery methods. The consequence of not doing so will mean failure, as judged by the user. The future of not only libraries but also of digital developments is unpredictable due to the rate of technological advancement and ever changing user needs. Innovation, adaptation and the ability to demonstrate leadership will be essential.

Baker references his (and Evans’) previous work as well as citing other authors. He surmises that the world at large is increasingly evermore digital and that libraries, being a point of knowledge, should ‘lead, not follow’. But there is a ‘significant deterioration of traditional library services’ because of lack of resources and an inability to ‘produce service solutions based on future likely technological advances’ which in turn is hindering much needed change. He goes on to explore the threats and opportunities that libraries could encounter during any period of change or transitional programme, stating that, ultimately, overcoming the threats and carefully evaluating and embracing opportunities is key to survival.


The focus is on the professional development of library staff. It is argued that the position (and role) of the library has changed in society, and it follows that the role of librarians has changed too. It is suggested that in the ‘pre-digital’ era, roles and responsibilities of librarians were well defined and static, yet today the role is ever changing and requires constant development to keep pace with technological advances. The authors call this change a shift from ‘information worker’ to ‘knowledge worker’, yet staff are still working with ‘yesterday’s tools’, and traditional CPD does not suffice. To innovate, ideas must involve staff, and development has to be broader than just academic development. Recruitment of staff from other industries would add fresh perspectives for innovation and further skills that might not be found in a traditional librarian’s skill-set.


Bradwell prefaces his work by arguing that through increased competition, insecure funding, and technological advances, two higher education public policies are jeopardised: the aim for everyone to be able to access learning, regardless of background, and the UK’s position
as the leader in a global education sense. He cites UCL’s Library Services Director, Paul Ayris, who is championing open access resources as a solution for this: ‘In the competitive environment of a global higher education market, Open Access repositories provide a platform on which a university can showcase its research. Open Access helps prospective students make a judgement on which university to choose, shares blue-skies research with the widest possible audience and supports outreach activity to open up higher education to new communities.’ Institutions need to be more responsive, if not pro-active in identifying student needs, and how technology can assist. In a digital age, the role of the university is to ‘guide and facilitate’ learning as opposed to imparting knowledge. Libraries could assist this change by become more inclusive and providing a variety of resources on the Internet. The role of the librarian is changing too: the ‘lack of staff skills’ is one of the biggest obstacles to any innovation.


Redefining the role of the librarian is key as the library is transformed through digital developments. Brantley suggests that considering user and institutional issues is key to innovation and increasing performance, thus future survival. Communication in all directions between all stakeholders should be improved to assist innovation. He cautions against undertaking a single project (such as digitisation with an external provider) and thinking this will suffice – technology is rapidly developing and so innovation projects should be continuous to keep up with the pace of change. The author advises library leaders that ‘libraries should be everywhere’ and especially at the forefront of innovation and collaboration: ‘Libraries are successful when they offer new services and when they help others discover services provided by others. By building bridges among these various sectors, libraries will be able to define themselves in the next generation. They will become the architects of collaboration.’


This report is written in the context of the Europe2020 strategy set out by the European Commission. It aims to answer three key questions, including identifying the main
challenges facing higher education as well as discussing innovation and exploring implementation. While it is a European publication, it describes regional differences within the sector, and seeks to address these. It identifies three main challenges in higher education – globalisation, the change in supply and demand (including the methods), and changes in funding. It also finds that technology does not necessarily produce innovation, rather it facilitates and enables it, and, perhaps, the needed shift toward ‘student-led innovation’ as opposed to what an institution believes is needed. The report also touches on policies and regulatory frameworks, arguing that these are not keeping pace with the required changes, and to overcome such barriers, any innovation should be backed up by sound regulatory frameworks (they cite the rise of MOOCs as an example).


Brundy focuses on the need for change within the academic environment. Problems of change implementation are compounded by two issues: declining budgets and technological advances (both well documented in this review and other literature). He cites Musman’s (1982) large body of work on innovation research outside the library environment which could be of use to the academic arena. One point of note is the perceived lack of correlation between an organisation’s structure and the rate of innovation. Brundy concludes that a ‘flatter’ organisation, with greater input from staff, leads to innovation.


Written following a review of organisational cultures and leadership styles from an ‘insider’ perspective by a university librarian from New York, the text provides librarians with a broad view of management styles, organisational learnings, and transformation concepts. It also highlights the need for transformational management and examines the relationship with organisational learning and adaptation. Because of a poor response to the survey underpinning the research, the paper does not quantify the extent to which library leaders at the time were implementing transformational leadership techniques as a vehicle for change. The questionnaire used within the research is included so that others can obtain an idea of whether their organisational leadership style is either transactional or transformational in nature.

This paper initially explores the legal and regulatory requirements of having qualified library and information professionals. However, it goes further, exploring the added value that they provide to the institution and the importance of continuous professional development – notably, they are trained in design, governance, implementation, and management of information services, which leads to risk being managed better for the institution. A most telling business justification to have qualified professionals was outlined by a study conducted at Syracuse University which found that every $1 invested in the library gave $4.49 in financial return (Kingma and McClure, 2015).


The paper explores the perceived impact of leadership development on the behaviours and competencies of employees as well as the organisational culture. The paper identified key areas: skills development, learning opportunities, strategic change management. It found that many ‘newly-trained’ leaders were self-aware and engaged, committed to learning and able to develop new skills, appreciative of change and accepting of challenges, accountable and committed to achieving the organisation’s vision and values. The author advocates leadership development as it enables competencies and behaviours to be developed through exposure to practical leadership situations. It adds that learning opportunities are changing the nature of the organisation’s culture to be more collaborative, flexible, open, and accepting of change. A more supportive learning environment where employees can create and use knowledge which is focused on achieving the organisation’s vision and values is becoming more commonplace and is a key driver of change.
While the paper is American, nearly 10 years old, and primarily focused on the use of physical space, it focuses through to 2020 and on technology leadership and future working methods.


Library leaders are increasingly being brought in from outside the profession, having not come ‘up through the ranks’. The report suggests that this is a positive change, and provided various support frameworks are in place, it can be utilised as a vehicle for change. Key measures mentioned are competencies in people and project management; business development; performance management; and advocacy. It also suggests that leaders need a ‘proactive and entrepreneurial approach’, continually improving the service and creating and maintaining partnerships to deliver shared objectives is key.


Dewey argues that that to be a successful leader within a library setting, it is not sufficient just to be able to ‘lead’; being able to understand university governance procedures and how to implement them to best align the library’s objectives to those of the institution’s objectives is critical. To do this, Dewey suggests that libraries and their leaders need to be members of key decision-making committees across the institution to influence policy. They need a broad understanding of strategic leadership and how it affects the library in order to be able to participate effectively. Dewey suggests that this can be obtained through various methods such as reading senior level documentation or discussions with faculty. She advocates ‘flipped leadership’ as it allows the library to participate in as many policy committees as possible, while furthering the development of staff, and building
key stakeholder relationships to further collaborations and partnerships. She suggests that organisations should structure themselves ‘horizontally’ rather than ‘vertically’ to ensure maximum exposure.


Written in more of a text-book style, with sections for each theme and sub-theme, this text is aimed at those who wish to broaden their knowledge, and provides a high-level overview of librarianship, the changing role of the library (and information professional) in the 21st century as well as numerous other LIS topics. It also highlights the importance, and the impact, of electronic and web-based information, for the dissemination of the same. It covers areas which are not library specific, such as policies and ethics, and does well in linking this back to the role of the library.


Garmer carried out this research after a round table discussion with senior library figures, with the aim of answering the following question: how can libraries embrace technology as well as employ it to build stronger communities? While the research is American, the challenges faced by the sector and the changes required are similar. The author argues that as the role of the library is developing beyond the traditional platform for access and learning, librarians need to think ‘outside the box’ to ensure that they are fulfilling this new role. She argues that transformation will be driven by three factors: ‘new narratives about the library's role in society; a culture of innovation that promotes new relationships, new networks, and new forms of participation; and committed, transformative leadership within the library profession as well as from other community partners including government, media, technology and civic stakeholder groups. She does, however, caution against thinking that technology will solve a library's problems: ICT is only part of the solution; investment in ‘human capital’ is needed to realise the full potential of an organisation. To achieve this, or indeed carry out any meaningful transformation, fundamental, systematic changes in both the library system and leadership are needed. She highlights this by using an example of becoming more community-focused: for staff to believe and buy into the change, the ‘whole internal structure [of the library organisation] had to be changed'.

Germano argues that libraries suffer from ‘a sort of organisational schizophrenia’ insofar as they have conflicting priorities: end-user wishes versus information control, which are at times at odds with each other because of the quantity available information made possible through technological advances. He also suggests that library managers have historically created policy in areas such as HR, service delivery and collections, though many institutions and their leaders have not adapted or revisited these policies as times change. They are therefore at risk of becoming outdated, leading to a risk of competitive disadvantage. To combat this, libraries need to either interpret the policies loosely and prioritise end-user needs above policy, or to revisit the policies entirely, and ensure that they are fit for purpose.

The author examines professional and personal traits held in high regard by managers and libraries in respect of recruitment; graduate adverts request ‘creativity and innovation’ as a pre-requisite. This is unsurprising, but innovation is generally still viewed with suspicion within the library sector, not only due to previous experiences and failure, but also to budget restraints. Germano suggests that suspicion of change is heightened because operational budget restraints may lead to additional workloads or even job losses, when change could have a positive impact in the longer term. To overcome these challenges, Germano suggests that while there are obstacles to overcome (not just those self-imposed by the library / institution, but also those imposed by the industry in respect of tools and applications commonly used), ‘visionary leadership’ is a must: he argues that it is not enough for a single institution to adopt visionary leadership: the whole industry must make a conscious effort to move towards this pattern of working. His definition of ‘visionary leadership’ is one where policies are created, that take into account end-user wishes, inviting them to be creative in structuring a forward-thinking organisation.

Germano suggests that senior management should seek to understand the leadership structures within the library (both formal and informal) as it can offer a ‘ground level’ view of whether there is indeed willingness to innovate and adapt to change. He argues that investing time to fully understand organisational culture, values and driving force is critical in effective leadership. He argues that the style of leadership employed also has a profound
Leading in uncertain times: a literature review

effect on the organisation’s values, culture and output: understanding the different styles of leadership, how they impact the above and how best to employ them to achieve the best outcome is critical.

Leadership styles are explored: trait-based, and relational / power-exchange based. Germano argues that trait-based leadership styles provide only a basis to build upon leadership as they do not generally focus on the ‘ability to influence followers’, the true focus of leadership. Situational leadership and transactional leadership have weaknesses too: while the ‘end may justify the means’, the resulting ‘transaction’ may alter the expectations of the group (or individual). Long term, the culture of the organisation may be affected, and this type of leadership cannot be sustained. The most effective type of leadership is transformational, seeking to influence those who lead at an operational level, which in turn promotes optimal performance of an individual. This approach is best suited for ‘fast-paced transformational change’ as it involves leading by imparting knowledge, and allowing people to take control of their own development, not only within the wider project, but also within their career.

Germano concludes that, to effect change, leaders may need to direct the conversation away from change and towards aligning needs with both institutional goals and end-user requirements. He suggests an analysis of end-user requirements and whether they reflect the true need. Creating change that is driven by end-user needs, and which aligns to institutional policy, Germano argues, is the most effective way to ensure institutions appear authoritative, desirable, relevant, and sustainable.


The paper focuses on skills required for library leaders. It is written as a direct result of research involving library students, library practitioners and library leaders. The research highlights the stark differences in perceptions between practitioners / students and leaders. The paper refers to Roberts and Rowley’s (2008) work, where it was found that library leaders lack ‘key strategic management and leadership skills’. Defining characteristics of leadership are effective communication and quality people skills; the authors argue that there is a
direct positive correlation between achievable outcomes, communication skills, people skills, and relationships. Internal marketing is also highlighted as a cornerstone of change management: if you ‘sell’ change correctly, there will be less resistance to transformation from those within the organisation as people will be excited about being involved in change.

Advocacy is also highlighted as a required skill for those within the academic library profession: there is no longer a captive audience as a result of growth of digital technologies and increased availability of resources. To ensure survival and growth, advocacy needs to be tailored towards not only external stakeholders, but also senior management so as to persuade them of the continued need of both the physical library and its resources. Linked to advocacy is the need to understand and to manoeuvre in political environments, both generally and institutionally: this not only gives an understanding of the politics of the institution and the corporate structure, it also enables leaders to understand where the power sits within the institution and to influence change.

Strategic planning and decision making are also highlighted as a key skill. Awareness of change and the ability to analyse and problem solve was rated by practitioners as being important, but leaders felt these were less important. Library leaders are seemingly more concerned with political sensitivity and mobility than leadership and change management, which are perceived by students and practitioners as being important.


Gwyer explores the future of academic libraries and discusses the skills required to deliver effective services. Using previous articles and trends as a solid foundation, she outlines a number of emerging trends such as the changing landscape of higher education, technological developments, user behaviour, communication, and the changing legal / regulatory landscape, and discusses each one in detail. She concludes by stating that whilst technology is evolving at a rapid pace, in order to succeed, organisations need to (and generally do) assert their preservation value and skills. She highlights that footfall in libraries
is in fact increasing, arguing that students ‘value the traditional “bookish” space, even in a time of increasing digital resources’. She also highlights the need for libraries to walk a fine line between the traditional service element and digital resources – suggesting that a greater focus of skills of librarians (and indeed leaders) would assist with getting the balance right – she quotes Delaney & Barnes (2014) in stating how a library of the future should look: ‘Ideally, they will need to create a future that builds on traditional values, services and skills of librarianship while increasing the “added value” they make to universities, staff and students.’


Gwyer draws conclusions from her research, focusing on leadership and how to invoke change as opposed to the type of change that is required. During times of change (primarily due to turbulent economic times), adaptation is required to move forward, not to ‘weather the storm’ and come out the other end in the same position with an expectation of proceeding with ‘how things were’. Change brings uncertainty; for change to be effective, leaders need to embrace and accept it, adapting their leadership style accordingly, placing more emphasis on a part of the skillset that they perhaps possess but do not currently use (such as soft skills or people skills) or perhaps step aside and allow new leaders to emerge. To increase the chance of success, changes should focus on four key areas: value, people, the right type of leadership and the organisation’s ethical values.


Hendrix discusses the rapid rate of change occurring in academic libraries today. Traditionally, academic libraries have been highly valued, but the inevitably changing landscape calls roles into question. Any change or transitional period needs to be led with emotional intelligence. The author suggests that although the primary focus of any organisation is to achieve its mission and goals, the secondary focus ‘is to take care of the emotional life of the people in the system’.
She also suggests that emotional intelligence is a necessary trait for leaders who are engaged in change management as during times of change, employers are looking for ‘hope, inspiration and confidence’ in their leaders. High emotional intelligence is not ‘being nice’ or ‘providing counselling’; it ‘encompasses nuanced functional competencies that are appropriate to the workplace’. A leader with high emotional intelligence reflects the climate of an organisation and its financial or operational success; conversely, many change efforts fail not because managers’ intentions are incorrect or insincere but because the managers are unable to handle the social challenges of change.


This paper focuses on leadership and capability within the UK HE sector. The report argues that the attribute of ‘negative capability’ (defined as: the ability to resist the ‘false necessity’ of deterministic solutions in building staff trust to cope proactively with ambiguity and change) and engendering trust may be assisting universities with the recent policy introductions by government. The research details changing leadership styles since the recession in 2009, and finds that a values-based leadership with skilful understanding and implantation of ‘negative capability’ along with rebuilding of trust is needed for academic leaders to maintain and develop their role within the higher education arena.


Jantz stresses the need for innovation. The problem is that libraries are perceived as ‘safe havens’ which follow a strict principle which does not lend itself well to deviation, let alone the creation of new ideas: libraries do what they do and are inherently averse to risk, so do not embrace change despite the obvious need to do so. Librarians are ‘so used to taking orders from the top down’ that change is unlikely to happen because of ‘cultural / organisational norms’; the issue of change and innovation encounters problems at every level. Librarians are averse to risk, and so ideas are not necessarily generated; even if ideas are generated, they would not be fed ‘back up the chain’ (or if they were, at each
stage, they are met with resistance as they ‘flouted the cultural norm’) and so operational management are no wiser as to the needs of the library. To effect change, librarians need to open themselves up to the idea of change and be prepared to take risks, at the expense of failing, and until their mind-set (and that of operational management) changes from one of libraries being a traditional static service to one of libraries being a dynamic, multi-resource environment, change will never happen.


Law’s text provides views on how libraries have responded to change in an increasingly digital era. It focuses on HE libraries, though it could be seen to be relevant to business change across industries. In common with other texts, it concludes that for libraries to innovate successfully and survive, they need to adapt more in order to be seen to assist the flow of information, as opposed to being a place which filters information, and thus education. To achieve this, libraries need to integrate more with the institution’s corporate mission, and further gives practical recommendations for change, not least that libraries’ social value should be revisited to ensure that it is understood.


Lewis examines the changing roles and responsibilities of academic libraries against a backdrop of many external (and some internal) driving forces. He outlines changes that academic libraries could adopt to bring them into the technological age, chiefly that libraries are no longer centred on ‘collection building’; they are now the guardians of information, campus wide and beyond. Lewis addresses digital innovation, transformation, demographics, strategic decision-making, and finance; he argues that the key to successful transformation programmes is to understand the ‘bigger picture’, of which his book aims to provide a loose ‘blueprint’. He concludes by adding a rousing ‘call to action’, suggesting that having ideas but not acting on them is futile.

The report consists of articles by different authors focusing primarily on the future of libraries through to 2025. Although hosted in New Zealand, it draws on texts from all over the world. Several principles align well to the UK position. The report aims to show what can be done to make services ‘even more amazing’ and asks where shared priorities lie to forge ahead with change. Articles within the report highlight the changing role of the library, and the need for the role of information professional to keep pace; as one author puts it, ‘library professionals are not just providing the menu; they are [now] cooking the meal with customers’. The report discusses the need for advocacy and engagement with both end users and stakeholders to ensure the best outcome.

The report looks at the relevance of libraries in society today, the future of the profession, and the key changes afoot. University libraries face distinct challenges: finance, changing user needs, and new services. It highlights the imperative of communication and change management, but cautions against collaboration with other institutions because of their competitive nature. It highlights the competing effect between digital information and traditional repository collections, but argues that, with the support of senior leaders (who seem more concerned with understanding user needs, technology, and advocacy) technology can play a part in transforming libraries.


This book is written in biographical format. The author covers the basic premise of management in libraries before detailing personal professional issues, and linking them (at a high level) to change management solutions. Massey addresses basic issues and provides techniques for managers to overcome negative situations and turn them into positive experiences – such as stress management in the workplace (by improving working conditions, building better relationships). The book is based on theory, but backed up by the author’s personal experiences.

This paper addresses the uncertainty over the ‘supply’ of leaders because of increasing turnover. The paper also explores the role of a leader and distinguishes it from that of a manager, outlining a leader with traits such as strategic thinking, visionary and motivator as well as one who contributes to sustainability and success. It explores ways in which leadership traits can be built on and adapted to the specific needs of organisations.


In today’s constantly changing society, leaders must be able to ‘create vision’ and be adept at sharing that vision with their team, allowing them to ‘create the reality’. Leaders do not lead alone; they require a team that believes in the library and the visions set out (they also do most of the detailed work). Leaders expressing gratitude and acknowledging the good work carried out by the team also increases the likelihood of retention as employees feel valued: ‘Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I will not forget you’ (William Arthur Ward).

Matthews argues that a great leader understands motivation and suggests that leaders should take time to understand matters that motivate staff, including the intrinsic value of work itself. They should ensure that motivators are factored into leadership decisions. Leaders delegate and empower. Delegation is a fact of life; but empowerment encourages staff to take on extra tasks that may be outside their job description but are at the core of the effective library’s organisational values. Delegation also allows staff to feel proud that they are contributing to the success of the library which in turn may provide further motivation and professional development. Good leaders are also life-long learners. We typically learn by trial and error, but life-long learners learn by actively seeking out development opportunities, by listening to people and by assimilating knowledge to become a ‘better decision maker[s] and … leader[s]’. Great leaders are decision makers, and while decisions are made by everyone, leaders make that decision as soon as an issue is identified and a decision needs to be made. Likewise, they take responsibility for everything that their library does, whether good or bad. They are also unafraid of delegating
responsible (although they still retain an element of responsibility in the eyes of senior management). Leaders need to display integrity and high character. He concludes his article as follows: ‘Library leaders should be striving to be “great” leaders. It is what the profession needs to flourish in the ambiguous future and regain the library’s relevance in the community. It is what’s needed for survival.’


Written from the perspective of a higher education manager, McCaffrey draws on a wealth of US and UK case studies that explore innovative management practices. He addresses situations where the legitimacy of management has been questioned, and offers ideas to overcome this obstacle. McCaffrey argues that there are four prerequisites to becoming a successful leader within higher education: knowing your environment, knowing your university, knowing your department and knowing yourself. The text addresses the key strategic challenges faced in higher education, as well as university governance, reputation and effective communication in crisis situations.


Librarians carry little weight in dictating how the library is run within HE institutions, as major commercial decisions are made from the top down. University libraries are ‘sleeping dogs’ and may as well ‘be left to lie’ (that is to say, libraries are low on the list of priorities for HE institutions, and are potentially seen as not adding much commercial value to the institution, so are left to continue without too much interference). The exception to this is perhaps the ‘ever expanding’ research library and its endless need for funds. Changes in resource allocation to more dynamic models have not especially benefited libraries in terms of their standing within the university. But then funding is only one challenge. Many librarians hold the belief that a library ‘does good’ and an ever-increasing resource provides more choice for those who frequent it without regard for the actual tangible benefit of the library or whether information could be accessed by other means. Clear business justifications need to be put in place for specific library projects and funding, along with strategies which take
into account the perceived benefit, but also in this ever more digital world, the availability of information from different sources. This should mean that only proposals with real value will be put forward and approved, leading to a change in perception of the library within the institution and, ultimately, the willingness of the administration to allocate further funding, thus enhancing reputation and value.


Nayar turns the common belief that we should put customers first on its head by arguing that we should put employees first, and in turn they will look after the customer. Drawing from his time as a CEO of a company which turned the hierarchal pyramid upside down by making management accountable to the employees. He discusses the success of this model, and suggests that open, honest communication and creating a sense of urgency so the employee can see the potential possibilities are key to success. He advocates a forward-thinking mind-set in employees where they are respected, driven, and given ownership to make decisions.


Parry has reviewed a wide range of literature (such as job adverts) to determine the lifecycle and skills required of an academic librarian, and how they and their management have evolved. She suggests that previous predictions regarding innovation in the academic library settings have been correct; there is no need to doubt that any further predictions will not be correct. In common with RLUK, Parry suggests that managers in library and information services should maintain an awareness of developing skills requirements within the sector to inform good practice in staff management.

This article was written as part of a project funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council. Eight themes were identified as being significant for driving change: technology, communication, teamwork, end-user requirements, business acumen, evidence-based practices, educational development, and attitudes towards change. The authors emphasise that updated skills and knowledge are required for innovating libraries to succeed. ‘Librarian 2.0’ is a state of mind: despite all the technological advances, a human approach is needed, alongside the willingness to innovate and constantly adapt and acquire new skills.


Written as a reflection of personal experience and interactions with senior managers by a LIS manager, this article seeks to ask (and answer) how we can implement change and whether managers have the skill to do so. It considers the traits required to be a good manager, and the need to embrace and transform with change as well as recognising the opportunities for change. It discusses transactional and transformational management, suggesting that there is room for both. Several factors need to be considered when facing change (some of which have been discussed previously, such as political landscapes, ethics, technology, and culture). To manage change effectively, bring the staff it affects along with you!


To evolve, libraries need to keep pace and ‘upskill’ their workforces. There are skills gaps across the library community, from the traditional subject librarian through to the newly created digital roles. The report warns that while demand for new technologically focused roles will be growing over the next few years, management need to ensure that institutions have the staff who are aware of what the role entails and are adept at carrying out their responsibilities to best effect to ensure continued success. Both proactive marketing and an increase in effective two-way communication are required, taking into account needs from the ground up.

This book provides a thorough review of leadership both in general and specifically within the information profession, drawing on other texts and leading professionals’ experiences. It argues that: ‘leadership skills are required at all levels of the profession, from the top, through to professional staff called upon to lead a team or to take a supervisory role. To meet these challenges, individuals must develop their leadership capacity’. It addresses challenges for leadership in general and in the information profession, as well as touching on personal leadership qualities and how best to refine them. It advocates and leads the reader through reflecting on oneself as leader and covers key topics in depth, notably change management, strategic management, and influential leadership.


Libraries are not given their due as ‘entrepreneurial centres’ nor as a key part of the institution. Instead, they are purely viewed as an ‘operation’ within the wider institution or the ‘dreaded centre’, so their potential is not fully realised. Advocacy, and the need to get involved in university-wide projects (not just for the benefit of the library), as well as networking both internally and with external partners (including other institutions) are key. Understanding how decisions are made and actions carried out is important: generally, universities have a formal governance and management structure, and a separate informal one, which is where decisions and actions really take place. Being part of this informal management structure and knowing how to navigate institutional politics will pay dividends when it comes to transformation.

Leaders admitted that their perceptions of end users and their requirements were not always correct, and that further work is need to understand needs. Some leaders still have an ‘us and them’ attitude, failing to understand how matters connect and benefit each other, or the institution and not just the library. This is especially true when it comes to cost-saving measures which focus on a specific department rather than looking at the bigger picture and establishing possible ‘root and branch’ changes across the institution or sector which could yield better results.
Library leaders should be university leaders rather than purely leaders of libraries as at present. The focus needs to shift from library expertise to leadership skills and attitudes and with advocacy across the institution – library leaders volunteering for projects outside their comfort zone to raise the profile of the library. Perceived barriers will thus be demolished. This should result in an array of different experiences, allowing people to draw on them throughout their career, giving them a broader perspective when carrying out their role as well as enabling various stakeholders to work together more effectively, which (generally speaking) they are not doing currently.


This text draws on management literature and case studies from the private sector as well as focusing on higher education, and the author’s own experiences, which provide an overview of the typical characteristics of university management. Shattock also defines and discusses ‘good’ management, and relates this to how it can contribute to a university’s success. It reflects current political, social, and financial developments, and reflects on the importance of carefully managing retrenchment, human resources, and teaching / research. The text discusses the impact of globalisation, research performance and related topics and provides advice on how to manage financial disjuncture within higher education organisations. Managers need to be entrepreneurial in their style as well as forward thinking, and being able to see ‘the bigger picture’.


The paper details the critical importance of understanding and accepting organisational culture, and highlights the benefits of both current and preferred organisational cultures in academic libraries, concluding that a positive culture creates a work environment where employees are committed to, and contribute to, the success of the organisation.

This paper serves as a reminder of the importance of strategic credibility and of ensuring that strategic goals are aligned to deliverable measures – and importantly, whether they are delivered. The author seeks to gauge the level of academic libraries’ strategic credibility by analysing whether strategic planning goals align with annual reports. There was not enough evidence for reliable conclusions to be made; however, the differences between Canadian and US institutions were highlighted. Canadian plans were more user-centric, whereas US plans were more focused on ‘hot topics’; which can be disengaged from what is required (as they are generally cascaded from senior management). It discusses recurring themes that are present in strategic reports, suggesting that they are challenges for the industry in general – such as offsite storage, communication and marketing.


This text is still highly thought of, and referenced by the academic community. It examines how social, economic, and technological changes have affected librarianship, then highlights the juxtaposition of theories and change needed from a leadership perspective to that perceived on the front line while also addressing poor business practices that may not help the running of an academic library. It explores career development, institutional politics, governance, and personnel issues that were then affecting the sector. A common theme is the tension between theory and actual practical implementation.


The paper explores not only the challenges faced by institutions, but also the perceptions and challenges faced by individuals. It identifies the further development needed in respect of up-skilling and increased delegation of responsibility, reinforced by project-based learning.

This paper was prepared for the 8th World Conference on Continuing Professional Development in 2009. It addresses the differences in management strategies and styles across multi-generations and recommends how to best collaborate via mentoring and coaching. It explores the need to attract new talent to the profession, addressing the issues around doing so and exploring the views of potential future leaders, and suggests that the overall aim of continued growth under the guise of professional development of new leaders will assist in generating new talent. It discusses the methods for ‘re-skilling’ staff, the transfer of skills, the importance of succession planning, and the cascading of knowledge.


This paper explores the changing roles of higher education professionals, drawing comparisons between the UK, Australia, and the US as an indication as to where the profession could be heading. Whitchurch also discusses the concept of a ‘blended professional’ (someone who draws traits from both professional and academic backgrounds) and examines how this creates knowledge, relationships, and indeed challenges in the higher education arena.


The paper addresses leadership strategic development and career development. It stresses the importance of adapting organisational culture and building individual and organisational leadership capacity to ensure efficiency and survival. It also addresses strategic planning, with reference to its relationship and engagement strategy and other strategic HR initiatives; and the conceptualisation, content, and competencies of the library.