

College Library Directors Report Midwinter 2011

There were 28 attendees at our Midwinter discussion group.

After a round of introductions where each library director shared successes and challenges experienced over the past year, attendees broke into groups to discuss trends and topics of interest, including web tools, library spaces and facilities, managing organizational change and dealing with personnel issues. Near the end of the session, each group reported highlights of their discussions back to the entire group.

Web Tools: One director is implementing OCLC's web management services and shared details about the decision making process as well as planning for implementation. The discussion of mobile web sites focused on vendor progress in making useful information available on mobile devices. Patron driven acquisition is relatively new and still evolving. Too soon to determine impact and value, but there is optimism about the potential of PDA.

Library Space/Facilities: Discussion focused on the challenges that can arise when architects, campus administrators and librarians work together to design useable spaces. If you are involved in remodeling project, it is important to visit other libraries that have recently been through the process, to discuss the process, see the results and find out what went well and what went wrong. Learn from others' experience. Participants also discussed pros and cons of having art gallery/display spaces in your library.

Managing Organizational Change: Participants shared strategies and techniques for engage staff in planning for organizational change. One director scheduled a series of sessions for department heads based on scenarios found in "Futures Thinking for Academic Librarians: Higher Education in 2025." Another suggested using organizational climate surveys to engage staff in the process of thinking about how the organization currently functions, and to gather benchmark data that can be used to measure impact of reorganization on the library. Breaking down departmental silos by holding joint departmental meetings and by instituting cross training across the organization have increased effectiveness and paved way for organizational change.

Dealing with Personnel Issues: Participants shared details and strategies about specific personnel situations at their libraries. One director shared their experience participating in a cross campus management round table structured like a book discussion group. Each meeting focused on discussion of a specific text. "Crucial Conversations" was an especially useful book.