Managing a Small Theological Library:

HOW TO COLOR WITH BROKEN CRAYONS

KRIS VELDHEER

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Contents

Foreword

*I*have known Kris for over twenty years, and I am thrilled she decided to write about her experience as a small library director. After being in a library leadership position for the majority of my career, I know how overwhelming the challenges for a small library director can be. During my library career, I have been a library director in a small school district, a private school, both a large and small public library, a large multi-state standalone seminary, and currently, a small seminary. Additionally, I have an EdD in organizational leadership from Pepperdine University.

While working in the San Francisco Bay area, I first met Kris. She was working at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley, and I was working at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary (now Gateway Seminary) in Mill Valley. As we worked at two of the very few theological schools in the Bay Area, we met on a regular basis to discuss our work, share our experiences, and enjoy the fellowship of another theological librarian. Each of our schools was opposite in their theological perspectives and collection development; however, we found a lifelong friendship based on our shared experience and the value of theological librarianship.

In our conversations, I discovered a bright, committed, and competent librarian. When I brought ideas or thoughts to our discussions, I found a listening ear and encouragement to try new things. In her GTU position, Kris was consistently trying new things and honing her skills, which later served her well as a small library director. In many ways, her GTU position was similar to that of a small library director.

I have always been impressed by Kris's ability and persistence to be a lifelong learner. After earning a master's in library science and then theology, Kris decided to go back for a third master's in instructional design and technology and recently completed her Doctor of Ministry at the Catholic Theological Union. When not seeking formal education, Kris took advantage of professional development opportunities, continually growing, learning, and adding skills to her portfolio. After we both had left the Bay Area, I needed an instructional designer to start an online learning program at my current institution, and I reached out to Kris. She responded, and we worked together for several years to establish an online learning program. As an employee, I found the same consistent Kris I knew as a friend. When a small library director position opened up, I encouraged her to apply. She eagerly responded and has been in that position for a number of years.

Throughout her career, Kris has been active in giving back to her guild. Currently serving on the American Theological Library Association's (Atla) Board of Directors and as Treasurer, Kris chaired the search for the new Executive Director of Atla and has been a consistent presenter at the Atla Annual Conference. For the past several years, she has been active in her local library guild, serving as a mentor to new librarians.

This book's idea came about after a conversation Kris had with Atla's Small Libraries Interest Group. At breakfast one morning at the American Academy of Religion (AAR), Kris mentioned this book idea, and we discussed the possible title of *Broken Crayons*. We agreed that the image of small library directors working with a small box of broken crayons compared to large university librarians working with pretty and pristine boxes of 64 crayons rang true. As our breakfast conversation continued, we talked about possible chapters for the book. After serving for over twenty-five years as a theological librarian, Kris wanted to share her learning and experiences with the upcoming generation of small library directors. Additionally, she desired to continue to share and support her guild differently and more substantially than a conference presentation or journal article. The

result is an excellent resource born out of the real-life experiences of a small library director.

One of the primary things I enjoy about this book is the perspective. Resources abound about management and even library management, but fewer resources exist for a theological and religious studies librarian navigating contexts filled with faith and denominational provisions intermixed with management. Written by a fellow theological librarian, the book's perspective allows the reader to focus on the topics rather than trying to translate the information and tips into their context.

Secondly, the ten core topics are arranged and presented in a way that allows a working small library director to engage with them as needed instead of having to read the entire book before discovering a gem. The topics range from essential library management to working with administrators and even a chapter on accreditation. Additionally, Kris sought input from fellow small library directors to enrich the variety of topics based on real-world experience.

Finally, I appreciate Kris's conversational tone and thought-provoking questions about these topics that allow the reader to pause and think about how to apply these topics within their context. Instead of providing the answers (no one actually can), Kris leads the reader through pondering and reflecting on the various issues, which is admirable. This format reminds me of the years Kris has spent mentoring and investing in future theological librarians.

After having known Kris for over twenty years, I am confident any small library director will find an idea or concept about managing a small library from this author. Kris is always learning, looking for new ideas or ways to accomplish work, and sharing what she finds along the way. If you don't see something of value in this book, I would be astonished.

Kelly Campbell
Associate Dean of Information Services, Director of the John Bulow Campbell Library, Columbia Theological Seminary
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Introduction

Do You Have What It Takes?

*I*f you are reading this, chances are good that you are either considering becoming the director of a small library or are already a small library director. There is a unique skill set needed to work in a small library that sets you apart from your university colleagues. First and foremost, you will need to be a generalist, competent in several different areas of librarianship as well as a subject specialist if your library caters to a specific topic, say theology or medicine. Moreover, if you are a director in a theological library like I am, you may also need to be able to navigate faith and denominational provisions. Then you will need to be adept at both public service and technical services, while throwing in a bit of systems and/or archival work into the mix as well. Remember, you are a generalist. Then stir into that mix the skillset of an administrator with budget responsibilities who often has some type of faculty status and responsibilities. Let's face it, you are stepping into a big job.

This book is a response to my own need in 2017 when I became a library director and realized there weren't any books that pulled together the main issues I would face as a small library director into one volume, and guide me as I started on this new adventure. Before becoming a director, I had been a department head in another library

as well as taking forays into consulting work and a stint in educational technology. Now I found myself in the library director's office with my name on the door. I was in charge, but I felt like an imposter. In my previous positions, my primary intention had always been to efficiently gather, organize, and make available library resources since I had worked in public services. Although originally most of my early years were spent doing instruction and reference, over time I added a bit of archives, some cataloging, and access services to my skill set. But on that first day as a director, I opened up a whole new box of things I needed to manage, like all of the technical services and the whole library collection. There was so much to learn, and I felt so underprepared.

The allusion to broken crayons in the title is from a chat among a few directors of Atla's Small Libraries Interest Group. While discussing library size and resources, the directors longed for what they described as "the big box of 64 crayons to color with" that these directors perceived so many college and university library directors have access to. Call it resource envy, but this group of directors found it hard to make do with a much smaller box of crayons. As someone quipped, they usually had eight broken crayons to color with in a small library. Unfortunately, the needs of small libraries require their directors to be very multipurpose, an approach often overlooked in books and articles on library management.

In my thirty or so years working in libraries, of which twenty-five have been in theological libraries, I have found myself doing everything from teaching workshops and finding lost books, to cataloging doctoral thesis projects and leading reaccreditation studies. Based on these experiences, I have selected ten core topics which I have always leaned into in my own library management, particularly over the last seven years as a library director. In Chapter 1, we will think about the essential functions of a library to help you set priorities for yourself and your library. Then, I will try to move systematically through the other key topics in managing a library based on my own experience. Chapter 2 revolves around staffing your library, so you can think about what your library needs to best serve its community. How you staff and any staffing changes your library experiences may need special handling in order to get everything done. In Chapter 3 I turn to collection development, which often falls to the library director in small libraries. Collection development involves understanding the curriculum of your school. Budgets and budgeting are the topic of Chapter 4. You will need to be able to manage money, even if your

Managing a Small Theological Library

library is small, and know how to leverage the library budget to get the most impact out of what few dollars you might have to spend. In Chapter 5 I tackle the topic of library services. You will need to match your services to needs and it can get tricky. Plus, these are the key internal operations you need to manage every day. Next, in Chapter 6, with the help of conversations with some of my Atla colleagues who are solo librarians, I sketch out some of the issues you may face if you are the only librarian serving your school. Then, the balance of the book will focus on what I think of as "beyond the library." These are topics you may not engage with every day but are important because they will take you out of the library. Chapter 7 focuses on working with the rest of your school and considering where else you need to be involved. This includes serving on schoolwide committees and perhaps having faculty status. You will need to know how to work with administrators, so in Chapter 8 I discuss managing up. Managing up is how you can best work with your boss, so this is an important skill to work on. Finally, I end the book with Chapter 9 on accreditation and Chapter 10 on succession planning. Whether these last two topics apply to you or not, it is always good to know something about them.

I am taking a conversational tone with this book, hoping the questions I ask in each chapter, as well as examples from my own work, will stimulate your thinking. The library you are directing isn't my library and you are going to run your library differently than I do. Thus, my intention is to help you think through some issues and share with you some of my experiences to either inspire you or so you don't make the same mistakes I did. Also, feel free to skip to those chapters that are most meaningful for you or may speak to something you are working on when you are reading this book. As you read, notice that I use school, institution, seminary, school of theology, and other similar terms interchangeably to try to cover as many different types of work environments as possible. Feel free to read your own library into the text. There is also a case study at the end of each chapter to help you see how someone else addressed the chapter's topic. I hope all of this will give you more to think about as you apply my ideas to your library.

After reading this book, I hope you feel better prepared to be a small library director. I have spent my entire career in small libraries, particularly small theological libraries, and have always thought the small library is unique. The small library feels institutional changes much faster than a larger library because an enrollment drop of even a few students can mean much less money for the library budget. But it goes much further than financial ramifications. Small libraries

provide an intimacy that I have found lacking in larger libraries that I have used over my academic and professional career. You will know everyone on your staff, faculty, and usually the student body by name and in many cases know some of their personal histories as well. In a small library, you will be challenged in ways you never thought possible. Even though this book is written for theological library directors as the main audience, any library director in a small institution will benefit from reading this book. Think of the book as a toolbox filled with tips and tools to help you be a better director. You will certainly be more knowledgeable about staffing, budgets, collection development, and many other topics you may not realize you will be responsible for. For those of you reading this who are not library directors, there is something here for everyone, because we can all benefit from learning from someone else's mistakes and experiences.

A bit about the research for this book. My initial surveys of the literature on library management didn't yield too many results. There were several titles from the American Library Association and the Association of College and Research Libraries on managing a specific department or doing certain tasks. There were also titles on hiring and managing budgets. I encourage you to go to the ALA Store website to see if any of the specific titles are better suited to what you are trying to do in your library. Instead, I focused my research on current literature from three sources. First, I mined Atla's website, particularly the *Summary of Proceedings* of the Atla Annual Conference and the journal *Theological Librarianship.* I also searched in library databases, particularly Ebsco's *Academic Search Complete,* for relevant articles or references to blogs that might be useful. Finally, I consulted several websites from fields like human resources, business, and management to help me integrate my experience into some of the best practices coming from other fields or broader discussions. Some of the chapters reflect this with short reference lists at the end of the chapter.

Lastly, a word of gratitude to everyone who helped make this book a reality. A huge shout-out to the Small Libraries group of Atla for the informal conversations at Annual Conferences that sparked many of the ideas I think about in this book. Also, the many conversations with Kelly Campbell and the ever-patient Evan Kuehn, my editor who coaxed this book into being. I would also be remiss if I didn't thank my spouse Jen Carlson, the sounding board for my ideas and as a non-librarian, the person who helped me make sense of random thoughts. I hope this book is, at the very least, helpful.

Doing More with Less

The Essential Functions

*I*n 1924, S. R. Ranganathan conceived of what he called *The 5 Laws of Library Science*, and by 1928 had formulated them into five statements. Later, in 1931, he published them in a book with the same title. In his book, Ranganathan outlined his theory that there were five laws that covered the principles of operating a library system. For him, these five laws of library science were "a set of norms, percepts, and guides to good practice in librarianship" (Haider 2017).

These laws are:

1. Books are for use
2. Every reader their book
3. Every book its reader
4. Save the time of the reader [corollary: save the time of the staff]
5. The library is a growing organism

If you are working in a small library, Ranganathan's five laws have wide implications for an approach to managing your library. Although they may seem daunting, you need to ask yourself, What am I doing here? What are the essential functions of my library and

how am I going to get things done? Whether you are a solo librarian or have a staff, there are never enough people or hours in the day to address every one of the five laws completely. We'll use these five laws to flesh out some guidelines that can help you understand the essential functions of your library. To do this, I am going to complement Ranganathan's rules with the five functions of librarianship as outlined by George Eberhart.

The American Library Association offers a definition of a library from George Eberhart. In 2010, Eberhart wrote, "A library is a collection of resources in a variety of formats that is (1) organized by information professionals or other experts who (2) provide convenient physical, digital, bibliographic, or intellectual access and (3) offer targeted services and programs (4) with the mission of educating, informing, or entertaining a variety of audiences (5) and the goal of stimulating individual learning and advancing society as a whole" (Eberhart 2010, 1). Although these are not exactly Ranganathan's five laws, there are similarities that can help academic libraries do the work of the library. Eberhart's definition breaks down the essential functions of the library, which can help you as the director of a small library set priorities, craft strategic plans, and manage your time effectively.

Before launching into the five points from Eberhart with help from Ranganathan's five laws, remember that you do work in an academic library and have added accountability to your institution. Your library is attached to a seminary or other type of higher education institution and serves two additional complementary purposes: to support the curriculum and the research of the university faculty and students. While curricular and research support both fit within Eberhart's definition, these two purposes make the library and the people who use your library somewhat different from public libraries.

The Five Essential Functions of the Library

Function 1: Libraries are Organized

Eberhart built his definition around the premise that a library is a collection of resources. *Resources* is a good term to use in libraries since you are frequently juggling physical books along with multiple digital and online resources. These resources, the books and everything else a library has for your students or faculty to use, serve as a guide to

help them do research. In higher education, particularly theological education, the primary assignment usually involves writing; therefore, writing becomes the way your library users will communicate their ideas. To fulfill this purpose, the library has many unique resources, as well as trained professionals, to help library users to utilize books and other resources. For Ranganathan, the first law emphasizes that everything should be directed towards ensuring that library resources are actively used, as the library is designed for this very purpose. The essence of the first law, "books are for use," underscores the importance of utilizing books rather than merely storing them. Eberhart's function of organizing the resources and Ranganathan's law of making them available for use is your essential first function. This function values the use of resources. Here are some things for you to think about when considering how resources are used in your library: Where is your library located on campus? What are the loan policies for library resources? What are your hours of operation? What is the size of your staff and how qualified are they to serve your users? In addition, the practical considerations such as furniture, temperature control, and lighting for a physical space, as well as considerations of access for online usage, should all contribute to the use of resources.

I think one of the biggest assets you can have when you are considering library access and organization is a strategic plan or a strategic set of priorities. When it comes to setting priorities for your library, remember that the school you serve is looking to you to organize the resources because you are the information professional. In some cases, you might have a library committee at your school or some other type of advisory group. But it is still part of your job to set the agenda for the library. For me, having a strategic plan for the library is separate from the institution's strategic plan. Feel free to use your institution's strategic plan as a way to help you understand the institution better and help you prepare for assessment and accreditation activities. There will be more about accreditation in Chapter 9. From the first point of Eberhart's previously mentioned definition, your strategic plan becomes a guide for your library to provide access and offer services that help you fulfill the mission of your institution.

I have found three effective ways to write a strategic plan. First, you can revise and update the existing strategic plan of your library. If you are new in your position, see if the library director had a strategic plan or how that person did library planning. Updating the existing plan provides continuity from year to year and helps you assess your progress. A second strategy to develop a strategic plan is to find

institutions similar to your own and ask their library directors for a copy of their plan. Not all libraries may have one, but that is also an important discussion you can have with other library directors. Using someone else's strategic plan, particularly in theological education, can give you insights as to how the library understands its role in the institution and navigates theological or religious perspectives. A third way to write a strategic plan is to start fresh and write an entirely new one. If you choose the third way, you may want to look at some existing strategic plans or even invest in a book or two on strategic planning. The Appendix lists a few websites for academic strategic plans as well as two book recommendations. The work of writing a strategic plan isn't always easy, but a plan will guide how your library operates.

You may ask, What if I don't want to have a library strategic plan? If that is your choice, you are not alone. Some librarians, including myself, choose to use the institution's strategic plan instead. I have adopted the institution's strategic plan for the library in order to keep the library at the same level of importance as other institutional programs and initiatives. Instead of a separate strategic plan for the library, I wrote a list of long-range goals during my first year as a library director. Those long-range goals have served as the basis for my yearly goals, which I update at the end of each academic year. I also use my yearly goals to measure progress during the year and to see what goals are appropriate for the upcoming year. The difference between these two methods might seem semantic, and it may come down to a matter of preference. In my experience, larger libraries typically benefit more from having a strategic plan. Part of your job as the library director will be to determine what works best for you and for your institution. Whichever you choose, make sure your planning addresses the priorities you set and can be communicated easily to those outside of the library such as faculty and administrators.

There are other types of plans you may want to consider for your library as well. Some institutions require each person to have a set of goals for each year, usually set at the annual review. These goals are set by each person and outline what that person hopes to accomplish in the upcoming year. Then at the end of the year, the personal goals become an evaluation method to see what each staff member has personally accomplished. Similarly, if your library is large enough to have separate departments within it, there could be department goals, such as how many books are going to be cataloged in a given year or how many instructional sessions will be offered. Department goals can also outline larger projects that need to be addressed in the

upcoming year, such as weeding projects. All of this planning does take time and planning can be tricky because plans ask you to shape the future. But plans can also be helpful in making a library director think about where they want their library to be in the future.

So, what actually goes into a strategic plan or goal setting? As you explore some of the strategic plans listed in the Appendix, you will notice some common themes. First, each is built around a mission and vision statement. Your library might already have one, but if it doesn't, you can craft a mission statement based on your institution's mission statement or adapt one from another library. If you are wondering if you need both a mission and a vision statement, the answer is yes and no. While a mission statement often suggests what a library provides, a vision statement is aspirational, outlining what a library hopes to provide. On the other hand, a library could just have a mission statement and use the points of the strategic plan to outline the vision. This may sound very confusing, which is why I recommend looking at how other academic libraries have shaped their strategic plans in order to help you arrive at the best way forward for your particular situation. Second, strategic plans usually consist of three to five larger goals that are then broken down into smaller, more manageable subgoals. These subgoals can be called initiatives, tactics, points or whatever is best for your library and institution. But each subgoal breaks the larger goal down into smaller bites that tell how you plan to accomplish the larger goal. For example, if my larger goal is to initiate an information literacy plan, my subgoals would each address how I plan to accomplish that goal. The subgoals might include developing new programs around academic reading or providing services and support to students at their point of need. Remember, as the library director, you have the power to create any kind of strategic plan that works for your library. Then third, a strategic plan usually has some assessment built in so that you can periodically review the plan and measure if you are achieving your goals. When you set the goals for your strategic plan, try to make them forward-thinking about where you would like to see your library in three to five years. Then write the subgoals so that they can be achieved in that period of time. Often the easiest or most basic subgoals are listed first, followed by those subgoals which are harder to achieve and may take more time. Before you become overwhelmed with strategic planning and all those goals, remember this: some kind of plan is better than no plan. So whatever progress you can make toward creating a plan for your library organized around access to resources will help you provide services to your users. Feel

free to keep working on the plan over time to make sure it meets your needs and the needs of those who use your library.

Function 2: Libraries Provide Access

The next essential function for your library is to consider Eberhart's second point of how to provide convenient physical, digital, bibliographic, or intellectual access. This dovetails with Ranganathan's second law of library science, "every reader his/her book," which conveys the idea that books are for the use of all. Further, this emphasizes the democratization of the library, ensuring that every reader has an equal right to access books aligned with their interests. The twist on this for academic libraries is that your users are generally your school's students and faculty. But you can also think of this in the broader context of having a responsibility to focus on serving all library users at some level. You are expected to have a deep understanding of the community your library serves, curate collections that cater to diverse interests, and extensively promote your services to attract a broad audience of library users.

   All of this suggests the question of what access means to you as the library director, and how your library provides access. Libraries employ a range of strategies to facilitate convenient access to their resources, encompassing both physical and digital dimensions. To ensure physical access, libraries strategically position themselves within communities, as mentioned above. Libraries also maintain flexible operating hours, accommodating the diverse schedules of patrons. A well-organized layout and clear signage within the library contribute to a user-friendly environment, enabling patrons to locate materials efficiently. But how do you actually set hours, and what if your layout isn't well organized? My rule of thumb for setting hours is to be open before the first class so students can come to the library to pick up books before they go to class. As for closing, while I try to keep my library open until classes are finished, I have found particularly with evening classes that students generally come to the library before class, but not after class when they are more interested in getting home. Similarly, my library used to keep Saturday and Sunday hours until I did a user survey and found out only a few students came on Sunday because students and faculty had other commitments. Cutting back on Sunday hours while leaving Saturday hours in place was sufficient to meet the needs of the community my library serves.

Managing a Small Theological Library

With regards to facilities, as a director you often won't have control over the layout of your library. You will have to work with the existing layout unless your school plans on doing a library renovation project. There might be a door where you don't want one to be, or getting to the library means traveling down a long hall or to another building on campus. While none of these situations are without a solution, as the library director you will need to work closely with your staff to find creative solutions. Sometimes maps and signage do work very well to help your library users find their way toward finding physical materials like books on your shelves. Whatever you decide for physical access, feel free to leave it a work in progress. There may not be one correct solution for your library.

In the digital realm, libraries provide online catalogs that enable users to search for materials, place holds, and manage their accounts remotely. Additionally, libraries offer access to digital collections, including e-books, audiobooks, articles, and databases, extending the reach of their services beyond the physical confines of the library. Most academic libraries use Library of Congress subject headings and make every effort to enhance bibliographic access. Whether you are working with a print book or a digital copy, it is important to use a standardized cataloging system and metadata to ensure accurate and consistent bibliographic information. I found this to be particularly true with digital collections, since there isn't a physical book to find on the shelf. A standardized cataloging system helps your students find materials quicker and usually offers them a system they have used in previous settings like college or undergraduate school. Eberhart's reference to intellectual access is fostered through reference services, where your library staff guide your students in their research and assist in locating relevant information in both physical and digital collections. Your library might also offer educational programs and workshops to promote information literacy and research skills. If your school has a writing center, consider partnering with them to promote writing and research skills. In graduate schools and seminaries in particular, students need to be able to research and write at a proficient level to graduate.

Technological infrastructure plays a crucial role in running a library. By this I mean primarily access to the internet, which is the way databases and the software to manage your library operate. I cannot remember the last time software was loaded onto my laptop. Even with word processing and spreadsheets, the rise of Google has made them an internet-based experience. Sometimes this is handled

by someone outside of the library for your whole school, and is increasingly wireless access. When libraries have a good technological infrastructure, students can use their own laptops and other devices to do research in the library or off campus. Depending on your level of technological competence, you may want to have staff members to maintain your library systems and electronic resources. Although not usually directly responsible for the internet connections like IT staff, you will need someone to make sure the library management system is up to date and functional to support key library departments like access services. As the director you may also need to team up with your school's information technology department and if it has one, the instructional technology department too. Keeping the technology up to date is a difficult job. Are you good with technology? Have you developed a technology vocabulary? All of the platforms your library provides and the ways your students can connect with these platforms serve as gateways to a wealth of information, enhancing intellectual access for patrons.

Finally, you might consider doing community engagement. Community engagement responds to questions like: Who uses your library or the campus or building your school is in? Are there local groups such as your school's alumni, local clergy, even people who might use some of your open source resources online that you can reach out to with your library services? Collaborating with different offices at your school, you can get information about library hours and programs into newsletters and emails that will go out to the people who use your library or may be interested in your library. Try also using the library website to get information out to community members. You will need a multifaceted strategy to reach all of the people who might want to use your library and meet the diverse needs of library users in both the physical and digital realms.

Function 3: Libraries Have Targeted Programming

To address Eberhart's last three essential functions of the library, I want to drill down a bit into each of these since they have been covered more broadly in the above section of this chapter. Like Ranganathan's third point of "every book its reader," Eberhart believes the third function of the library is to offer targeted services and programs. But what does that look like in small libraries where staff time for programming can be limited when there are many other tasks to accomplish? Let

me suggest three ways even the smallest of libraries can significantly amplify their impact by providing targeted services and programs designed to meet specific needs that are consistent with getting library resources into the hands of people who need them. These three suggestions are crafted to cater to diverse interests, deliver specialized assistance, and actively engage patrons in meaningful ways.

The first suggestion is for targeted programming around literacy. This can take many different forms and, as mentioned above, may involve a partnership with a writing center or a writing coach on your campus. Let's get concrete and ask the question: What does a literacy initiative look like for a library? You might consider offering workshops tailored to helping students build their theological literacy by building their vocabulary of theological terms. Some degree programs at your school might attract students without a strong academic background or even a college degree. That group of students may not be as familiar with terminology used by faculty in class. This offers the library a great opportunity to partner with faculty to develop theological literacy programs using library resources. Likewise, depending on the language of instruction at your school, the library might be a place to offer adult literacy classes, or English as a second language (ESL) courses to address language learning needs more effectively.

Recognizing the importance of digital literacy, libraries can organize workshops focused on technology skills. A library I worked at in the beginning of my career offered workshops on HTML coding, creating PowerPoint presentations, how to use bibliographic software like Zotero, and keyboard shortcuts for Microsoft Word. Although they were not directly related to library material, the workshops were among a suite of digital literacy tools offered by my library. They proved as popular with students as workshops on searching the library's online catalog because students were seeking to enhance their proficiency in an increasingly digital world.

My second suggestion is to identify software packages that might be helpful to your students such as Bible software or church management software. Even software that helps churches track their finances might be helpful to your students. In one of the libraries I worked in for several years, there was a computer specifically set up for students to try Bible software before they bought the software for themselves. That way each student could decide if the software was worth the expense and if the software was something they liked. Students were also invited to make suggestions for what programs they wanted the library to have on the demo computer. That library

also found software developers were happy to give the library a price break on a copy of their software for the demo computer. Keeping the demo computer was an easy way to increase student use of the library with a targeted service.

Finally, a third suggestion is providing cultural and heritage programs for targeted outreach to students and faculty. Over the years libraries I have worked in have hosted Day of the Dead displays during late October, provided space for remembrances during All Saints and All Souls celebrations, hosted Halloween parties, put out chocolate Advent calendars in December, celebrated Hanukkah, and even celebrated faculty publications. You can include events, exhibitions, and presentations that celebrate the diversity of cultures within the communities served by your school, denomination, or faith community to help foster a sense of inclusivity and mutual understanding. Because these were in the library, I also included displays of relevant books for students to browse and check out. I think this gets at the heart of Ranganathan's third point of every book its reader.

These are just three suggestions for deepening the discussion of Eberhart's third function of offering targeted services and programs. Each of these suggestions was done in a library setting that had four or fewer full-time staff, and many times one staff member took responsibility for the program, event, or teaching the classes offered. In fact, with some of the classes, they could be turned into short videos or slide presentations that could be put on a website. Your library can also host targeted community outreach events, such as book fairs, author talks, or themed festivals. These only take one librarian and can draw specific audiences and contribute to a vibrant sense of community engagement. Through these varied initiatives, libraries proactively target the diverse needs and interests of their communities, cultivating an inclusive and supportive environment for your library patrons.

Function 4: Libraries Educate, Inform, and Entertain

Similar to his third point, Eberhart's fourth point focuses on the mission of the library. For him, this includes educating, informing, or entertaining a variety of audiences. In the section above on strategic planning, I mentioned that a strategic plan is built around a mission and vision statement. The mission is multifaceted, encompassing the goals of educating, informing, or entertaining a broad spectrum of audiences. This comprehensive objective underscores a dedication to

delivering content that is not only diverse but also enriching, ensuring its resonance with individuals from various backgrounds, ages, and interests. I know this sounds a lot like material covered previously, but having a good mission statement is helpful also for Ranganathan's fourth law, "save the time of the reader," and the corollary: save the time of the *staff*. If the aim of your library is to empower your students with knowledge and skills, contributing to their personal and intellectual growth by providing informative resources, engaging programs, and opportunities for continuous learning, then write a mission statement reflecting that goal. You can even get specific if you want to mention how you are going to do that through workshops, lectures, or curated materials, for example. For me, a library mission statement is those few lines that tell your users what you do and your librarians what their job is and will be a defining moment. As the director of a small library, you are always going to be doing more with less, so be clear about what you do and what you don't do.

Function 5: Libraries Stimulate Learning

This leads to Eberhart's last point and Ranganathan's last law, that the goal of a library is to stimulate individual learning, and the library is a growing organism. Yes, they are slightly different in their use of terminology, but both writers in defining a library are focusing on learning and how learning changes people's minds. If the library you direct is in step with the institution or school you are connected with, then you will need to embrace their mission of educating and informing a variety of audiences. As I have implied above, these audiences need to recognize that a library is a living, growing organism. The conventional role of simply checking out books and making sure everything looks neatly shelved no longer applies. Libraries, particularly in the internet age, are evolving dynamically to meet the changing needs of diverse communities.

Library directors are the stewards of an ever-expanding repository of knowledge, constantly adapting and promising. With a focus on education, information dissemination, and providing engaging content, your library can be a vibrant hub that nurtures intellectual curiosity and fosters lifelong learning. You can also actively cultivate an environment of inclusivity, ensuring that your resources and programs cater to the varied interests and backgrounds of students, faculty, staff, alumni and interested other users. Through curated materials,

interactive workshops, and events, the library can be at the forefront of educational evolution.

While all of the above suggestions addressing the points of Eberhart's library definition and Ranganathan's Five Laws may leave you feeling overwhelmed, unfortunately neither Eberhart nor Ranganathan address time management. When you are in a small library with fewer staff or even working as a solo librarian, there are more demands for you to switch from one task to another all day long. You don't always have the luxury of setting aside time to plan, write or research when you are trying to catalog a book while providing reference service to students. This is where you will need to set limits, which can be difficult for librarians who often want to be as helpful as possible. There are many books available on effective time management, some of which I have listed below. I will also take up this topic again in Chapter 7. Personally, I have found that using the library mission statement and the larger goals from my strategic planning process as guides can help me to set my regular priorities to effectively manage my schedule. You may also want to regularly take stock of how much time you are spending outside of the library doing things for your institution. I will address this topic in Chapter 7 when the focus turns to your work outside of the library. Many library directors are also considered part of the faculty and serve on academic committees and as part of professional organizations. All of these commitments take time and require you to manage your days accordingly.

There is no easy path to writing a strategic plan or managing your library effectively. But once you have either a plan or a set of goals, you have a structure to guide you in managing your library effectively. As I alluded to above, most plans or goals have assessment pieces so you can tell if you are making progress. But it is also important to understand you may not achieve as much progress in all areas as you would like to. You may also need to rewrite some of your goals or subgoals to adapt to institutional changes. What is most important is that you find ways within planning to see progress and track how the library operates over a period of time. By using the suggestions above as well as the list of resources below, you are well on your way to having a strategic plan or a set of goals.

Case Study

A small theological library serves about 200 students at a seminary offering mostly Master of Arts degrees since the Master of Divinity degree is attracting fewer and fewer students. There is some talk among the faculty about starting a new Doctor of Ministry program that might specialize in counseling, preaching, or maybe Christian education. Other faculty want to launch new certificate programs, which are easier for students who work full time to finish. There is also the matter of trying to decide how much of the curriculum to shift from in-person classes to classes offered either as hybrid or fully online. While the library collection of about 80,000 volumes is fairly current and subscriptions to many of the most popular theological journals are up-to-date, the library director, Gloria, is worried. Due to enrollment, the dean is talking about further cuts to the library budget and cutting one of only two librarians on Gloria's staff. In talking to her staff, Gloria knows that their greatest strength is their commitment to personal service for students and faculty. Although Gloria has only been there for a year, her staff and the faculty tell her that students appreciate how the number of classes and workshops the library teaches helps them complete assignments. Students are also happy with their access to the printed books Gloria buys for the library. Yet, if the library budget is cut and the curriculum shifts to online learning, how will Gloria and her staff keep up? Using the above analysis of Eberhart's definition of the library, Gloria wants to write a new library strategic plan to help her as she adjusts the library to the changes going on at the seminary.

Gloria decides to start with the mission statement from her library which she thinks is up-to-date. She wrote the mission statement about six months ago after she had time to get to know her two staff members better and got input from the faculty on the mission statement also.

Library Mission Statement

Guided by a steadfast commitment to intellectual growth, lifelong learning, and social responsibility, the seminary library stands as a foundation providing essential resources and services to support student learning and faculty teaching. The library functions as an educational partner, to participate in knowledge generation and access, designed to transform learning experiences that transcend traditional boundaries. Our library mission encompasses the creation of learning environments that foster inquiry and exploration, cultivating a vibrant atmosphere where the pursuit of knowledge is not only encouraged but also deeply valued.

With all of the changes happening at the seminary, Gloria wanted to write a strategic plan that reflected some of the ideas from Eberhart's definition, but keep the plan tightly focused on the seminary library. Similarly, with a small staff and a shrinking budget, the strategic plan needed to be able to scale to the size of the staff and use the existing resources Gloria had on hand. This is the strategic plan she crafted.

Strategic Plan

Educational Excellence: We will develop and implement targeted educational programs that cater to different degree programs and learning preferences. Our action steps include expanding workshops on literacy, technology skills, and academic support. We will collaborate with existing seminary programs such as the writing center to enhance educational outreach and introduce specialized programs for English language learners and skill development.

Information Services Enhancement: To provide cutting-edge reference service and resources that align with emerging trends and curriculum needs, we will continuously update and diversify the library's collection. Whenever possible, investment in digital resources and technologies

will enhance accessibility and availability particularly for students. Emphasis will be placed on developing additional services that support students both on and off campus.

Community Engagement and Inclusivity: Fostering a sense of community belonging and inclusivity in the library through diverse programming and services is a key objective. Our action steps include establishing events, exhibitions, and presentations that celebrate the diversity of cultures within the seminary and encourage dialogue. Also, recognizing the importance of digital literacy for all students, the library will focus educational opportunities on technology skills. The goal is to prepare a student to graduate with the best set of skills for their chosen career goals.

Technological Innovation: To embrace technological advancements and improve service delivery and accessibility, we will implement user-friendly digital interfaces for catalog searches and resource access. Exploring virtual programming and digital outreach strategies will be a priority. Investment in training programs will enhance staff proficiency in emerging technologies.

Sustainable Growth and Funding: Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the organization through strategic financial planning and diversified funding sources is crucial. Regular financial assessments and cost-effective measures will be implemented. We will pursue grant opportunities and establish a list of potential projects for donor funding. Other types of community or alumni fundraising initiatives will be explored to support special projects and enhancements.

Staff Development and Empowerment: Cultivating a skilled and motivated staff that aligns with the organization's mission and values is a priority. Action steps include providing ongoing professional development opportunities, encouraging a culture of innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning, and recognizing and rewarding exemplary contributions from staff members.

Through the implementation of this strategic plan, the seminary library aims to not only fulfill its mission but

also to evolve as a responsive and indispensable resource that meets the diverse needs of the seminary community.

After reading Gloria's mission statement and strategic plan, what do you think? Has Gloria captured some of Eberhart's definition in the plan? Where would you make changes to tailor this for your library? Do you see the essential functions of the library being covered in this strategic plan?

Key Points from Chapter 1

1. Strategic Planning and Goal Setting: Strategic planning is essential for managing a small library effectively. A strategic plan helps in setting priorities, crafting plans, and managing time efficiently. This involves creating a strategic plan that aligns with the institution's mission and vision, identifying goals and subgoals, assessing progress periodically, and adapting to changes in institutional priorities or circumstances. Whether revising an existing plan, seeking inspiration from similar institutions, or starting fresh, having a strategic plan provides a roadmap for the library's operations.

2. Providing Access and Services: A core function of the library is to provide convenient access to physical, digital, bibliographic, and intellectual resources. This includes considerations such as setting operating hours, optimizing physical layout and signage, maintaining an online catalog, offering digital collections and databases, and ensuring technological infrastructure supports users' needs. Additionally, libraries offer reference services, educational programs, and workshops to promote information literacy and research skills. Engaging in community outreach further enhances access and fosters inclusivity.

3. Offering Targeted Services and Programs: Libraries play a vital role in offering targeted services and programs tailored to meet specific needs and interests of their users. This involves initiatives such as literacy programs, workshops on technology skills, and cultural and heritage events. By providing diverse and enriching content, libraries stimulate

individual learning and contribute to personal and intellectual growth. Despite resource constraints, even small libraries can amplify their impact through focused programming and community engagement efforts.

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Staffing the Small Library

*T*he rate of change in libraries is breathtaking, and particularly unsettling for libraries that are accustomed to stability both in organization and funding. While sometimes it is said that staffing is all about the people, larger libraries have more of a cushion to hire specialists for specific tasks or job responsibilities. How do you staff a small library, particularly a theological library, with a very specialized collection? What does it take to work in a small library? Staffing can be the bane of a small library's existence, where often a patchwork of staff does the work of multiple people. In this chapter, I will discuss four ideas, namely, why every position is important, setting priorities for the type and size of staff that you need, staffing options that are worth considering, and finally, how the human resources department might help you in the staffing process.

Why Every Position is Important

In a library every position is important, but in a small library how you staff the library requires careful planning and consideration.

Historically, the main positions held in a library were the library director, reference librarian, access or circulation librarian, acquisitions librarian, and cataloger. Larger libraries might have a designated interlibrary loan librarian, or an instruction librarian, or perhaps an archivist. But a quick scan of library job boards in 2023 found such job titles as media specialist, bibliographic specialist, research services librarian for undergraduate research, and assessment librarian. Job titles have certainly expanded beyond the original five to encompass a whole new world of imagined positions for someone to fill.

Before taking up how you might think about staffing your small library, let's think about how library staff roles have evolved. From the list of main positions in the paragraph above, I want to consider four positions that have changed immensely over the past thirty years. In the evolving landscape of library services, acquisitions librarians find themselves navigating the intricate terrain of both traditional and virtual resource acquisition. Beyond the conventional selection and purchase of books and journals, they grapple with the complexities of "access without ownership" issues presented by some databases, managing leased electronic databases, and ensuring the suitability of electronic product license agreements. While they are not legal experts, their analysis becomes indispensable in aligning licensing agreements with local settings and anticipated patron use patterns. For example, is it better to buy a one-user e-book license or spend (often considerably) more money on unlimited access, which may come free of digital rights management?

Catalogers, too, are adapting to a shifting paradigm, expanding their roles to encompass not just print books but also diverse formats such as e-books and e-journals. Faced with increasingly sophisticated library automation systems, catalogers make informed decisions regarding linking to electronic journals and managing holdings across various databases. The creation of records accommodating multiple access points, from print holdings to direct links to electronic versions, has become an expectation. Cataloging the internet itself has emerged as a new responsibility, with librarians applying evolving metadata systems to the point where many catalogers are renaming themselves as metadata librarians.

Reference librarians face a dual challenge, continuing to serve patrons in person while also supporting a growing remote-access clientele with high expectations for service. The shift to virtual reference transactions, often via email, web pages, and Zoom, introduces complexities that require specialized support from reference staff.

With technology advancements, reference librarians increasingly take on roles as educators in information literacy. In fact, in larger libraries, the reference librarian and instruction librarian are often two different people. There might even be another librarian for first-year students. But alas, small libraries don't have that luxury.

The ubiquitous library website has become a crucial tool, leading to new roles for librarians. As libraries leverage their websites as exclusive platforms for electronic patron service, librarians are integral to the design, maintenance, and updating of these websites. This responsibility includes addressing dynamic changes in URLs, what types of databases and resources to have on the website, and the evolving needs of library patrons. While automation assists, librarians play a central role in the ongoing development and maintenance of these critical online resources. Again, some libraries have librarians dedicated only to managing the library website and often the library's social media presence. Amid these challenges and changes, libraries grapple with optimizing limited staff resources to meet the burgeoning demands of technology-driven services. Library directors are rethinking staffing strategies, trying to recruit personnel with diverse skill sets, and employing creative supervision strategies that are essential to crafting solutions not only to address current challenges but also to exhibit flexibility to adapt to future changes. It is an ever-evolving landscape in both higher education and library services.

Setting Priorities for the Staff that You Need

If those are the basic positions you are going to need to cover, the challenge is how will you cover them? Perhaps you can start to figure this out by asking yourself some questions. For example, how many hours do you need to be open every week in order to serve the needs of your seminary or school? Do students have their own keys to the library? What kind of library services do your students and faculty expect, both in person and online? How many people currently work in your library and what do they do? What is your current ratio of librarians with a library degree to library paraprofessionals? Do you have student workers and maybe volunteers? Do students live on or close to campus, or is your school more of a commuter school and your students mostly online? What associations or networks is your library a part of and what services does that participation offer your

students? The list could extend far down the page, but you get the idea. My point is, when you are making staffing decisions, there are a number of factors that should go into your decision.

If you think back to Chapter 1's discussion of the essential functions of the library, you can get a sense of why every position is important. At some level you are going to need someone to attend to every aspect of Eberhart's list. You are going to need someone who can organize the collection and provide access, which is most likely a cataloger or metadata expert. You could need someone to offer services and programs such as library instruction. That position might be held by a reference or instruction librarian. You may also need someone skilled in customer service for circulating physical books and dealing with students and faculty. Then there is also someone to manage electronic resources and maintain library systems. As the director, you need to know something about each of these positions and might be able to cover some of these yourself. But unless you are working as a solo librarian, which I will discuss in Chapter 6, you are going to need help since all of these positions are important for keeping a library running.

One of the first things to realize about library staffing is your library cannot be everything to everyone. You are going to have to make choices and set priorities. Based on your strategic plan or your goals, what are the most important aspects of your library that need attention? Remember also all of the questions I posed a couple of paragraphs back, because your answers can help you make the choices that will work best for your library.

Let me give you some examples from my own work. In one library I worked in, I was in charge of reference, instruction, circulation, interlibrary loan, and online learning, sometimes known as public services. While I could cover reference and instruction with a single librarian and circulation plus interlibrary loan with a smaller staff of three full-time paraprofessionals and student workers, neither of these divisions of labor covered the skill set needed to support online learning. Now most libraries are not in charge of online learning or instructional design, but the library I was working in had online learning as part of library services. To meet this staffing need, I hired a student with previous online learning experience to work part-time supporting faculty and students just for online learning. At first the position was for about ten hours a week, and because of need I was able to increase the hours to a half-time position within a few months. By assembling this array of employees for my department, I covered each of the areas I was in charge of while at the same time freeing

myself up to serve as a backup for each of the areas. I set my priorities in this case to offer excellent customer service to each aspect of the department I was running and to avoid overlap between the areas.

Something that can't be overlooked in library staffing is using paraprofessionals in support positions. Library support staff, also known as library paraprofessionals, play integral roles across all levels of library operations. Their involvement spans a wide spectrum, from managing entire libraries to contributing highly specialized expertise in specific fields. The nature of their duties can range from routine tasks to supervising and directing other staff members. Attempting to generalize about library support staff can prove challenging, and the quest for a universally applicable job description for library support staff becomes nearly impossible. The diversity and intricacy of their responsibilities hinge on factors such as the specific position, the size and type of the library, and the unique needs, goals, or mission of each institution.

The primary distinction often drawn between support staff and librarians is the possession of a Master of Library Science degree (MLS). In practice, however, this demarcation is not always straight-forward. Individuals without an MLS may hold leadership positions at the highest echelons of library management, while those with an MLS may occupy roles traditionally not requiring this specific degree. The fluidity in these distinctions underscores the adaptability and varied expertise that library support staff bring to the diverse and evolving situation of library services. It is important to note that individuals who earn an MLS degree typically have a college or university degree earned prior to their library degree. Paraprofessionals, on the other hand, have a different credentialing as described below.

The terminology for library support staff remains as diverse as the roles they fulfill, covering titles such as library assistants, para-professionals, non-MLS staff, paralibrarians, and more. The terms "non-professionals" and "sub-professionals" have been used, but these labels are met with resistance from support staff who feel that such designations do not accurately reflect their dedication and the valuable skills they bring to their roles. The evolving landscape has elevated the expectations for support staff, requiring them to employ increasingly sophisticated skills, ranging from knowledge of computer systems to proficiency in MARC or other metadata records and various data control techniques.

As library tasks have become more specialized, educational require-ments for support staff positions have also evolved. Many roles now

necessitate at least college education or specialized technical training, whether through a college degree or a library technical assistant (LTA) certificate, or training in data processing. In the United States, community or technical colleges often offer the LTA certificate as part of a two-year degree program. Currently the support staff profile has significantly progressed from the early days of libraries, reflecting the increased complexity and technological demands of the profession. Looking ahead, the library workforce will inevitably be influenced by technological and financial factors, particularly for small libraries. When talking about technology, I am referring to the increasing presence of internet-based software as well as artificial intelligence (AI). Working with e-books, searching online databases, using library management software, and using mobile devices like phones and tablets are a part of the library profession now and this will continue to be even more important in the future. However, coupled with the technological demands is the cost of purchasing and maintaining these tools. If the small library already has a small budget, then it is only a matter of time before the budget may not be able to keep up with the technology. There is a similar concern with staff training and development. It takes time and money to keep a library staff up-to-date. Thus the precise path of the personnel structure in response to many factors remains uncertain and requires careful thought from the small library director. However, what remains true is that support staff will continue to play a key role in doing the work of the library and hold their enduring significance within the library community. For more information on the variety of paraprofessional positions that you might think about for your library see the "List of Support Staff Positions" maintained by the American Library Association on ALA.org.

Let me elaborate on two different ways I have staffed libraries where I was either a department supervisor or the library director. In the library I described above where I was the department supervisor, three positions that reported to me were classified as paraprofessional or support positions. Although none of the positions required an MLS degree, each of the positions was filled by either someone with a four-year college degree or the LTA certificate mentioned above. Additionally, one of the paraprofessionals had a master's level degree in philosophy, and another had a master's degree in library science. This training meant that each person knew their jobs very well and didn't require much supervision from me. While I don't think there is a definite correlation between holding a college or advanced degree

and not needing a great deal of supervision to do your job, personal experience has demonstrated that to be the case.

Staffing was handled differently at the institution where I served as library director. In this library, when I started the position, there were two full-time librarians, three full-time paraprofessionals, two part-time paraprofessionals, and an archives volunteer. I found within the first year of being the library director that much of my time was spent supervising the paraprofessionals on a daily basis. Although each of the individuals was very dedicated and had worked for the library for many years, each person adhered overly strictly to their job descriptions, and I found it very difficult to make changes to library services or adapt to new circumstances because my staff was not as flexible in their thinking as I wanted them to be. I want to underscore that the three paraprofessionals I worked with as a library director were highly skilled, knew their jobs well, and were well-liked by the students. However, I will never be sure why there was such a difference in supervising one group of paraprofessionals over another based on my management style. In order to accomplish the goals I had set for the library, I needed an overall staff that could mostly supervise themselves. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, and will take up again in Chapter 7, as a director how you manage your time is important.

As a library director, I decided to prioritize spending less time supervising staff and more time developing relationships outside of the library. In order to make this possible, I managed the staffing of my library accordingly. As the paraprofessionals in my library retired or left for other positions, I consolidated the staff described in the previous paragraph into a staff of three full-time librarians with at least a master's degree in library science and some student workers. Thus, I eliminated all of the paraprofessional positions in my library. Later I added another temporary full-time librarian brought in to work on a special project. The logic behind this staffing change from paraprofessionals to librarians was twofold. First, many aspects of the work of my three librarians are interchangeable. This added the level of flexibility I needed. Second, having fewer but more highly skilled staff freed me up to attend to wider school and faculty matters. Although I can cover for everyone on my staff if needed, my schedule is more open to serving on faculty committees and engaging in activities outside of my library for the good of my institution. I want to emphasize that every position is important, and my staffing decisions may not suit your library or your current staff. I also want to emphasize that my experience has been that paraprofessionals needed more supervision

than librarians with a library science degree. That might have been unique to the situations I have managed and can vary widely depending on the people you are supervising.

Another consideration when thinking about library staffing is the need to help librarians keep up on their professional development. Limited staff can mean an inability to leave the library to attend conferences and workshops. Although because of the COVID-19 pandemic many opportunities exist for professional development online, attending online conferences might not suit each of your library staff. Beyond the full or part-time employees, here are some options that may help you think through staffing scenarios for your library.

Staffing Options to Consider

There are many options for staffing a library including using volunteers, student workers, and even pooling librarians with another library. For a small library every position is important, and you need to set your priorities for the type and size of library staff that you need, or better yet, that you want. How will you maximize services with minimal staffing?

Some libraries may take advantage of volunteers to staff certain positions. Volunteers can play a vital role as valued partners in advancing your library's mission or strategic plan offering to library users by expanding and enhancing public services. Their contributions extend to crucial tasks that often fall beyond the scope of a library's regular operating budget, thereby proving essential to sustaining the quality of library service. This is especially true for small libraries. In various capacities and under the supervision of library staff or you, as the library director, volunteers support the library by helping library users, assisting with special projects, and participating in library events. It's important to note that volunteers complement paid library staff and willingly take on their tasks and responsibilities without financial compensation or expectations of benefits, including travel expenses. Recognized as representatives of the library, volunteers should be held to the same standards of work and behavior as employed staff members. However, don't forget to acknowledge their commitment to excellence and the contribution of their talents and skills. By investing their time and energy in your library in a way that contributes to

the learning of your students, volunteers can find the deep reward of making a positive impact on students through their dedicated service.

There are a number of different ways you might be able to use volunteers in your library. Do you need an outreach specialist? You can use enthusiastic individuals who are willing to actively promote library services and resources at seminary or community events. Libraries can engage outgoing volunteers to bring along library flyers or information on the hours the library is open in order to build community connections and expand your library's outreach efforts. You might have a volunteer who can be a program facilitator. Harnessing the passions and expertise of volunteers can lead to innovative programming and libraries can encourage volunteers to run programs based on their interests and skills, with the library handling the advertising. Examples include volunteers who can help students prepare resumes, become teachers for ESL circles, and offer language classes. Thinking creatively allows for diverse and engaging programs your library might not otherwise be able to offer students.

For those volunteers who prefer a more hands-on volunteer opportunity, use them as shelf managers. Volunteers can be trained to shelf-read, which enables them to ensure the organization of an assigned section and spend time rearranging books. These people can be supervised by your access services librarian or whoever is in charge of stacks management. If shelf-reading is too hard, they can focus on the equally important task of shifting books, as there is always a demand for this role. This approach not only optimizes the library's operations but also provides meaningful opportunities for volunteers to contribute to the maintenance of the collection. You can also develop collection assistants to fine-tune your collection. Task them with checking reports of missing books to make sure something has not been shelved in the wrong place. Volunteers can also research subjects you may not be as familiar with and compile lists of books for library acquisitions. Additionally, they can assist in locating and developing signage pointing to specific collections to enhance the visibility and appeal of those collections. I have found when it comes to collection management, there are never enough people to work on making sure every book is in the right place.

Finally, volunteers can act as social media managers or technology experts. Effectively managing social media can be time-consuming, especially with the goal of frequent posts. Utilizing volunteers as social media managers can lessen the burden on library staff and you. Volunteers can assist in posting relevant information like library

hours and updates to new book lists, as well as use third-party apps like Facebook to maintain a library presence. The third-party apps make reposting content seamless. You will need to establish clear content guidelines for the volunteers and have someone from the library staff frequently check their work, but you will be able to ensure a consistent and engaging online presence. Technology experts will ideally be the volunteers with technological expertise using laptops or individual software like Excel or PowerPoint. These individuals can be invaluable in various capacities. Some libraries allow them to work one-on-one with patrons, offering technical assistance. Alternatively, their skills can be harnessed for internal tasks, such as installing updates and reimagining laptops to optimize performance. Having technology experts ensures that essential but time-consuming computer maintenance tasks are addressed efficiently, particularly if your seminary doesn't have a robust information technology department. Volunteers can play a crucial role in keeping library technology running smoothly, allowing staff to focus on other priorities.

I have seen volunteers work on archival collections, learn to do copy-cataloging of library backlogs, cover circulation desks when the regular staff is away, do collection management through reshelving and book shifting, and even maintain library websites. In each case, these were tasks that I either didn't have regular staff to cover, or that would have kept my staff from tackling other projects.

Student workers may also be a hidden asset you can use to stretch the library budget. Student workers may need training, so be prepared to spend the time helping them acquire the needed skills. But students can also have a more flexible schedule to cover evening and weekend hours when your library needs to be open to serve the needs of students and faculty. Similar to volunteers, students can be trained to do other library jobs like reshelving, stacks management, or answer basic emails about library hours and services. The point here is to think carefully about the needs and priorities of your situation and try to be as creative with staffing solutions as possible.

Increasingly, there are also technological solutions that can help with your library staffing needs. Software can streamline the acquisitions process, self-checkout stations for library users to check out their own books relieves always having to have someone present to do circulation, and software packages can be very helpful to manage electronic resources. Each of these technological solutions comes at a price and you will need to carefully weigh which options are best for the library you are serving depending on your budget.

Managing a Small Theological Library

A last item to think about for staffing your library is pooling librarians between more than one institution. What I mean by that is one library director might be in charge of more than one library, or perhaps two libraries share one cataloger. While this practice has been going on at college and university libraries for many years, the practice hasn't taken hold as quickly among seminaries and theological schools. Maybe due to the complexities of working out salary and benefits packages, some librarians have worked for more than one institution but did it as an individual, not as a coordinated effort between schools. There have also been some schools that had a shared campus and a shared library but paid the library staff from one school or another school depending on the position held by the librarian. Yet the idea of pooling libraries and library staff seems to be taking hold in some seminaries as budgets constrict and enrollment numbers decline. The pooling of librarians or sharing of librarians might be a key discussion point in addressing the future needs of library staffing for smaller libraries. Rather than doing without a librarian, two libraries could share the same person with some kind of arrangement worked out regarding salary and benefits. This is an issue that will need to find its way into library strategic plans and service models.

How Human Resources Can Help

In closing this chapter on staffing the small library, it is important to consider how human resources might be managed in the institution you serve. For some smaller schools, the person doing human resources functions more as a benefits administrator who makes sure all employees receive their benefits and payroll functions properly. On the other hand, other small schools might afford a part-time or full-time human resources manager involved in benefits administration but also in helping with employee recruitment and staff retention. How an institution decides to staff its human resources department is not usually the purview of the library director. However, in the staffing process, having a robust human resources department that covers all aspects of recruitment, background checking, benefits administration, and staff retention can be a real asset for finding and keeping a strong library staff. Human resources can also provide much-needed guidance for a library director if there are any legal provisions to be followed and if

there are any issues related to the faith community that supports the theological institution that the library director works for.

Staffing your library to meet the needs of your institution can be both frustrating and rewarding when the search process leads you to good candidates to choose from. Thinking through what your needs are and how much of your time as a library director you want to devote to supervising staff may also lead you to consider some of the alternatives I have outlined in this chapter. Ultimately, you as the director are responsible for ensuring your staff gets the work of the library done and serves the needs of the institution. So take your time understanding your unique staffing needs and think carefully about where you want your library to be in the future by using your strategic plan or goals.

Case Study

During her time as the library director, Amy has seen the library budget shrink as enrollment at the seminary has gone down. Now, with only one librarian as a staff member who does most of the cataloging and other technical services work, keeping the library open to students has become a real challenge. Also, as the library director, Amy does collection development, acquisitions, and reference, plus she serves on a faculty committee. The students at Amy's seminary mostly live close by and enjoy coming into the library to pick up books and read the latest journals. Lately enrollment seems to be increasing, but mostly with online students who further task Amy's skills to keep the library systems working. After several conversations with her staff librarian about what she should do about the staffing shortage, Amy devised a plan to address the challenges.

First, Amy scheduled an appointment with the director of alumni relations at her seminary to discuss if there were any local alumni with technical or social media skills. Understanding that using a volunteer might be risky if their skill set didn't exactly fit the work, Amy decided a volunteer to keep the library computers up to date and manage the library website would take some of the workload off her

and better support her staff member. She also hoped she might be able to find other alumni that might be willing to tutor students on how to use databases and search the library's catalog. The way Amy looked at it, asking alumni to volunteer in the library was one way to shift some of the work to others with subject matter expertise, but maybe not librarian skills.

Next, Amy looked for a technological solution so she wouldn't have to interrupt her work just to check out books to students. Given that students at the seminary really enjoyed coming into the library, letting them check out their own books seemed like a good way to give the students a sense of ownership in the library's collection. After weighing some of the options in self check-out systems, Amy bought and set up one of the stations near the front door of the library. She and her sole staff member spent time creating handouts and offering brief workshops on how to use the new equipment to make sure everyone knew how to check out their own books when they left the library.

Finally, Amy held a library open house for students. At the open house, she recruited a few students who wanted to work in the library and then worked with the human resources department on campus to hire some of the students. Some of the students worked nights to keep the library open for other students, while the staff librarian taught a student how to shelve books and maintain the stacks. Again, this part of Amy's plan still needed a budget, but at her seminary, students worked for a lower wage than regular staff and were all part-time.

In this case study, there are many other ways Amy could have solved some of her staffing shortages. Bringing on a number of volunteers or student workers isn't always the ideal solution since it could take time out of the director's already-heavy workload to train and supervise them. That is something Amy and her staff librarian are going to have to keep statistics on and analyze the collected data regularly. But Amy is hopeful new library workers will solve the issue.

A second staffing scenario is a slightly larger library, but a shrinking enrollment. The library director, Stan, has been in his position for about three years and believes the students and faculty are being well served by the library. However, Stan can see upcoming budget issues that he thinks he needs to address soon. The current staff at Stan's library is sufficient to cover everything that needs to be done and they also have some student workers to cover evening hours. How does Stan address his future budget issues?

In surveying his seminary campus, Stan noticed that there was little support for the information technology department on his campus. Similarly, the dean was talking about adding a writing center to the seminary to help students do better in their classes. At a meeting with some other librarians, Stan talked about what was going on at his seminary and a librarian suggested that Stan talk with his dean about having the library house either the information technology department or help launch the writing center. On his way home, Stan thought about it and decided to schedule a meeting with the dean to suggest the library take over both departments as part of the library. While Stan admitted he doesn't really have the expertise to supervise these additions, having them as part of the library might stabilize the library budget. Expanding the library in these directions would also give students access to new resources without having to go to other parts of the seminary. Stan thought it would be a little bit like one-stop shopping.

To prepare for this meeting with the dean, Stan did research on how other libraries worked with information technology, writing centers, and other non-library departments on campus that might fit best in the library. Stan sent his findings to the dean prior to the meeting to make sure the dean understood all of the issues so that their discussion would go smoothly. Ultimately, after a lengthy conversation, the dean was persuaded to try Stan's suggestion for the next academic year and see how well it worked for all of the departments involved as well as the students. If the first year went well, the dean was open to keeping information

technology and a writing center in the library as part of the library budget and under Stan's supervision.

Can you see yourself or your library in either of these two case studies? Are there other opportunities that might exist on your campus for creative staffing? What would you add to either of the case studies from your experiences?

Key Points from Chapter 2

1. Importance of Every Position: Despite the challenges of staffing a small library, every position holds significance in ensuring the smooth functioning of the library. From catalogers to reference librarians to those managing electronic resources and maintaining the library website, each role contributes uniquely to the library's operations. While larger libraries may have specialists for specific tasks, small libraries often rely on a patchwork of staff who must multitask to cover various responsibilities.
2. Setting Priorities: When staffing a small library, setting priorities is crucial. Directors must assess the needs of their institution, considering factors such as the required hours of operation, expectations for in-person and online services, and the existing staff-to-student ratio. Strategic planning and goal-setting guide decisions about staffing, ensuring that limited resources are allocated effectively to meet the library's core objectives.
3. Exploring Staffing Options: Small libraries have several staffing options beyond traditional full-time positions. Utilizing volunteers, student workers, or pooling librarians with other institutions can provide valuable support while minimizing costs. Volunteers can assist with tasks ranging from shelving to social media management, offering flexibility and expertise. Student workers, meanwhile, can help cover evening and weekend hours and contribute to various library functions, complementing the efforts of full-time staff.
4. Human Resources Support: The role of the human resources department is integral to the staffing process in any

institution. While the extent of HR support may vary among small schools, having robust HR functions can facilitate recruitment, background checks, benefits administration, and staff retention. HR professionals can provide guidance on legal provisions and address any issues related to the institution's faith community, supporting the library director in building and maintaining a strong staff.

Books, Journals, and So Much More

What are the books, journals, and other resources that make up a library's collection? The most obvious answer to that question is "it depends." Over time, some libraries create special collections or become known for having material on a given topic. The collections of small libraries might have interesting origin stories; for instance, the initial collection may have come from a pastor's study, a professor's office, or from another school. No matter how your library was created, you as the director are the ultimate steward of that collection. Often in small libraries, the director is in charge of collection development or at least has the responsibility to keep the collection development policy up to date.

When it comes to your library's collection, it doesn't matter whether you are an experienced library director or if this is your first director's position. If you oversee collection development, the three best bits of advice I received as a new library director were, first, get to know your

library collection. What are its strengths and weaknesses? What is the focus of the collection? Where did the library come from? Second, how up-to-date is the collection development policy and what does it cover? And third, who are the stakeholders in the collection? Do faculty regularly suggest books? How many books are added to the collection each year? As I recall, it took me six months to work through these three bits of information and reach a point where I truly understood what was on the physical shelves and what electronic resources were available. In addition to this advice, there is a great deal of additional knowledge you are going to need as you start doing collection development or overseeing an acquisitions librarian. For some of us who haven't had a great deal of experience in this area, the learning curve can be steep in understanding how to work with vendors, using or not using standing orders, the ups and downs of dealing with e-books, and even managing journal subscriptions. Then there is the perennial question of the library acquisitions budget. Personally, I think collection development has been one of the hardest parts of my job as a library director, but there are tools to help you succeed.

What follows from here is an exploration of four topics on library collections. First, I'll consider the collection development policy since it is often a starting point for anyone with collection development responsibilities. Second, I will explore some of the more hands-on issues, such as working with vendors. The third topic will look at collection management and weeding. Finally, I will cover some strategies for dealing with book donations.

Collection Development Policy

Let's begin with the collection development policy because that document will steer the direction in which your library collection will go. No two collection development policies are alike. To prove this point, I have included a list of collection development policies from a few universities in the Appendix. There are any number of topics you can include in a collection development policy, from who is involved in the process, to acquisition methods, to what specific areas your library collects in. For example, when I started as a director, I hired a consultant to write a new collection development policy because I thought the former director's collection development policy didn't make sense. The former director had very specific language about how much was

collected by each Library of Congress classification number, which did not align with the curriculum as I understood it. After working with the consultant, the library's new collection development policy aligns with the library's mission statement, which is guided by the school's mission statement. This is the same mission statement I used for the library's strategic plan in Chapter 1 of this book.

To further give you an example of how a collection development policy can be revised, the policy I use begins with the purpose of collection development, management, and access. It also defines what collection management means and offers general collection development guidelines. The guidelines specify who is responsible for selection, what is the scope and content of the library, and specify that the collection is for graduate-level research at the Master's and Doctor of Ministry degree levels. Rather than use Library of Congress call numbers as a guide, I specified the areas of collection focus by the areas of concentration available through the curriculum of the school. Further, I was also detailed about the languages the library collects. While you may disagree, I think a library should first be driven by the curriculum, then by broader topics related to the curriculum. I also included a section on formats, making a distinction between print and electronic, and when the library buys in duplicate formats of both print and electronic. Finally, the consultant spelled out the difference between ownership and access. It is up to you, as the library director, to decide how simple or complicated your library's collection development policy will be. Some of this will depend on your style of management too.

Hands-On Collection Development Work

Now that you have a collection development policy in hand, how do you do the work of collection development? The collection development policy is merely a set of guidelines, and it is up to you, as the library director, or the acquisitions librarian you supervise, to actually implement the policy. Let's assume that because this book deals with small libraries you, as the library director, are making acquisitions. Thus, when you are doing acquisitions, you are centered on procuring new materials for the library, encompassing various tasks to achieve this objective. You will be determining the items to be ordered. Once the items have been identified, you will need to research pricing from various vendors, place orders, oversee the purchase, ensure receipt

of the books, and may, if you don't have a cataloger, prepare items for circulation. For electronic materials, securing the necessary licensing is also part of the responsibility.

Even if you have an assistant or a librarian who can handle the ordering process for you, you still need to do research by reading publisher's catalogs, going to professional development events, joining library listservs, and even tracking titles that your students and faculty request from other libraries. You can cultivate relationships with faculty, asking them for suggestions while also reading their book lists each semester to see what they are assigning to students for class readings. You are also going to need to be aware of changes to the curriculum that might affect what your collection needs to hold. These are often important sources for new titles. Finally, as part of doing collection development, you will also need to oversee journal subscriptions and standing orders as they are important parts of helping to keep your collection current. As explained below, there are always new technologies and services being created to help you with collection development. I want to insert a side note here about interlibrary loan. Sometimes, I have used interlibrary loan request information to help me understand more about what I might need to add to the collection or about subject areas that might not be in my collection development policy. Because interlibrary loan services and interlibrary borrowing agreements further broaden the spectrum of available resources outside of your library, tracking what books or subjects library users are requesting from other libraries could be a useful tool to expand or focus your collection. I have also used interlibrary loan data to tell me what I don't need to have in my collection if a student can get the resource from someone else. This is just one more example of a way to help you do collection development.

Financial management is a significant aspect of your job, requiring you to align orders with the library's budget. Again, you may have someone in your library who can do this for you, but in my library, I pay the bills. This involves processing invoices and ensuring timely payments to vendors by working through the processes of the business office. Something I have found very helpful is keeping a spreadsheet of all library expenses per month so I can see quickly where the budget is being spent. In my spreadsheet, I have a single budget line for books and a separate line for periodicals and journals. But I also have three columns that help me track how I spend the single books budget line by material type: print book, e-book, or standing order book. Track your budget in a way that works for you, but know that you may be

asked how much you are spending on print materials and how much of your budget goes to electronic resources. On average, I spend 10–15 hours a week on collection development, acquisitions, and the financial management of the library.

Moving on to some of the more hands-on issues, how do you work with vendors? In the current U.S. marketplace, the two biggest book vendors for academic institutions are EBSCO/GOBI and Clarivate/ProQuest. Both vendors offer platforms for you to buy both print and e-books, and in my experience the pricing is similar. You also have the option of buying from individual publishers, but publishers are increasingly merging or joining distribution networks. There are also vendors who work with multiple publishers that can help you with collection development. There is even software for some cataloging systems that allow you to order books directly through the cataloging system to streamline the acquisitions process. With some of these options, there may be costs involved, so investigate carefully. Also, your institution may be tax-exempt, so be sure to submit that paperwork to any vendor you use to save your institution some money. No matter how you choose to get your books, having a smaller list of vendors you regularly work with can streamline the process and save you time in adding books to your collection.

Although this may have been covered in the curriculum at the library school program you attended, there are terms involved in collection development that deserve a review. Standing orders are items purchased without creating a purchase order. They are books that are usually part of a series, and you receive the next volume automatically. There are also serials, which can be print or nonprint publications issued in parts. Serials usually have a volume or issue number along with an issue date. While not always the case, serials are expected to continue until further notice. Some examples of serials are newspapers, journals, annuals, and periodicals. What is important to note here is all periodicals (magazines) are serials, but not all serials are periodicals. There are even some known as irregular serials that come out occasionally but not on a fixed schedule. The main difference between a periodical and a journal is that a journal is a publication that comes out on a regular schedule and contains scholarly articles. Periodicals come out periodically with or without a regular schedule. These are all important parts of your collection but can be very confusing. For example, I have found one of the main differences between a standing order and a serial is that I must pay my serial subscriptions before I receive the journal. On the other hand, standing orders often come with

an invoice to be paid after I receive it. All of this is to say, again, you may need to develop spreadsheets or other ways to track the various standing orders, periodicals, series, and serials your library receives.

What has taken me the longest to get used to as a library director doing collection development at this scale for the first time is understanding how the previous library director did collection development. How did my predecessor work with the collection development policy that they had written? Why did they put these series on standing order? How many standing orders did they create? Why did they continue buying these journals? I needed to understand some of this to cut certain titles as well as add new ones. After the rewrite, my collection development policy was quite different from the previous one and my collection priorities were different. For me, doing collection development wasn't just about ordering books and updating journal subscriptions. I also spent the first two years as a library director winning back the trust of the faculty after the previous director wasn't interested in their collection development suggestions. In fact, I find the input of the faculty very helpful since they know their areas of expertise far better than I do. Because everyone is different and will have their own approach, prepare yourself for that adjustment period when you become the library director.

A final consideration in working with vendors is demand-driven acquisitions, sometimes just abbreviated as DDA. DDA revolutionizes the traditional approach to library acquisitions by prioritizing actual usage and patron demand over predetermined selection criteria, like your collection development policy. In this model, libraries harness data analytics and real-time usage statistics to inform their acquisition decisions, particularly around buying electronic resources like e-books and e-journals. Usage metrics play a central role, helping library directors to identify high-demand materials and areas within their existing collections. A key characteristic of DDA is the shift towards patron-initiated acquisition, allowing users to directly influence purchases based on demonstrated interest through accessing or borrowing specific items.

How does this actually work? Libraries using a DDA program often conduct trial periods for certain resources, acquiring or subscribing to materials only if there is substantial user interest during the trial. The model's emphasis on electronic resources aligns seamlessly with the ease of access and usage tracking offered by digital materials, with e-books being a common focus. In other words, you subscribe to a database, say JSTOR, that offers your users access to a large set of

titles to find and use. If a student or faculty member finds a book in that large set of titles that they want to use but the e-book isn't in your library collection, they can request access to the e-book. Depending on how you set up the DDA, either the student will be granted immediate access and your library will be billed by JSTOR, or an email will be sent to you saying someone wants a particular e-book and then you need to decide if you want to buy the e-book for them. Much of this is based on a threshold you can set for how much you want to spend per e-book. Flexibility is a hallmark of DDA, enabling your library to adapt collections dynamically to changing user needs. Furthermore, DDA contributes to effective cost management, preventing unnecessary expenditures on materials with limited utility by aligning purchases with actual demand. Overall, DDA represents a responsive and user-centric paradigm in libraries, ensuring that your collections evolve in tandem with the preferences and needs of the library's community. If you decide to do a DDA program through one of your vendors, make sure you set reasonable limits on how much you are willing to spend on an e-book and see if you can limit purchases to certain subjects. After some trial and error, my library has a very low spending threshold, which means almost every DDA turns into a user request for us to purchase that e-book. Once I look at the title and usually talk it over with my staff, a decision can be made if that e-book is within the scope of the library's collection and the collection development policy. None of this is easy, but using a DDA program can save you time and help your library users tell you what is important to them.

A similar approach to DDA is evidence-based acquisitions (EBA). EBA is a data-driven approach to collection development which I primarily use for e-books, focusing on making purchasing decisions based on actual usage data and other metrics rather than traditional selection criteria from my collection development policy or subjective preferences. Like DDA, this method involves collecting data on resource usage, analyzing trends and patterns, and making informed decisions about acquiring new resources to ensure they meet the demands of your library community. For me, what makes EBA different from DDA is that instead of looking at trends in how often a database is used, I look at how often a book is requested as well as how many times a library user cannot get to a book they want. These two points of data, use and turn-aways, help me add relevant books to the collection. The benefits of EBA include cost efficiency, a user-centric collection, and transparent, justifiable acquisitions. However, challenges include the resource-intensive nature of data collection and analysis, the need for

continuous monitoring to adapt to changing user needs, and balancing the breadth and depth of the collection. Overall, EBA aims to enhance user satisfaction and engagement by tailoring collections to actual user needs. One example of this is that I have a yearly agreement with JSTOR in which I pay them at the beginning of the school year for access to upwards of twenty thousand additional e-books, mostly from subject areas beyond theology and religion. Then at the end of the school year, JSTOR sends me a report of the most used e-books, and allows me to choose which of those books I want to add to my e-book collection permanently, using some of the money I paid to them in the beginning. In other words, JSTOR rebates some of my initial e-book usage fee to let me buy some of the most used books from their collection that I don't already own. This translates on a yearly basis into adding about twenty or so new titles that my students or faculty have used often during the previous school year. I consider using EBA, particularly the JSTOR model, to be really useful since I prepay at the beginning of the school year for usage and then can use those same funds to buy the most used and useful titles at the end of the school year for the library's e-book collection.

Weeding

A slightly thornier issue for library directors is weeding. In a small library, collection maintenance and weeding are usually driven by the library director and reflect the mission and goals of the library's collection development policy. In larger libraries, the collection development policy might include a whole section on weeding with detailed criteria by format. On the other hand, small libraries can be nimbler. The American Library Association recommends academic libraries use one of two methodologies, either MUSTIE or CREW (American Library Association 2018). These acronyms stand for misleading, ugly, superseded, trivial, irrelevant, or obtained elsewhere for MUSTIE and for CREW, continuous review, evaluation, and weeding. I suspect small libraries do a combination of both. A note of caution about weeding superseded editions. Depending on the changes between one edition and another, sometimes it is good to hang on to every edition so students and faculty can compare editions to note changes. Before you weed earlier editions, be sure to compare them to make sure you know why a second or third edition was published. Some library directors

choose to involve faculty in the weeding process and that might be a good idea if there is a library committee that meets on a regular basis. On the other hand, using whatever staff you have available to review potential weeding candidates helps you make sure that something important for your collection doesn't get weeded by accident. You can also use circulation statistics and publication information to make decisions about what to weed from your collection. There is software such as OCLC's GreenGlass that can help you with weeding projects by helping analyze your print holdings (OCLC, n.d.). At this time, the debate about weeding e-books has yet to be settled since that type of book doesn't add to space constraints.

Libraries, much like well-tended gardens, should actively engage in the dynamic process of collection management, involving the regular and strategic removal of materials, commonly referred to as weeding. Notice that collection management is done on an ongoing basis and weeding is a part of the collection management process. This practice, more formally known as deselection, plays a crucial role in maintaining the relevance, quality, and accessibility of your library's collection. Specifically, within the academic library context, where the primary objective is to support teaching and research endeavors, weeding becomes a necessary and thoughtful exercise.

The criteria guiding the weeding process encompass several key factors, some of them noted above. Age is a significant consideration, particularly in swiftly evolving disciplines such as pastoral care and many aspects of spirituality where the older the information, the less pertinent it tends to be. Within theological education, there are also many interdisciplinary topics, like intercultural relations, interfaith dialogue, and emerging religious communities that can change quickly. Obsolescence becomes a decisive factor in determining the suitability of materials for retention. Usage statistics, diligently collected, offer valuable insights into the frequency with which physical books are checked out. Items that have remained untouched for extended periods, possibly spanning decades, may be tagged for deselection, aligning usage and age as integral aspects of weeding decisions.

The physical condition of items is also a critical element in the evaluation process for weeding. Damaged books prompt decisions about repair or replacement based on their continued usage by library users. The advent of newer editions, often seen in academic titles, further shapes weeding decisions, with libraries often opting to retain the most recent edition to ensure the collection reflects the latest advancements

and information. But as I noted above, there are exceptions to having only the most recent edition.

Weeding projects, whether undertaken sporadically or on a larger scale, serve various purposes. These include aligning the collection with current user interests, ensuring the currency of materials, eliminating outdated resources, making room for new acquisitions, and improving the overall accessibility and navigation of the collection. Through this hands-on process, you will gain valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of your collection, facilitating informed decisions on future acquisitions, enhancements, and other items your users might want you to buy.

Contrary to libraries tasked with the indefinite preservation of the scholarly record, many libraries operate with the primary goal of meeting the evolving needs of their user communities. This is very true for many theological libraries. Acknowledging the finite nature of shelf space and the changing landscape of user preferences, weeding emerges as a regular and indispensable facet of library activities. The fate of weeded books, often directed toward organizations like Better World Books, underscores the commitment to sustainability and the continued dissemination of knowledge. Better World Books is a for-profit, socially conscious business that is a global online bookseller. It collects and sells new and used books online. Many theological libraries in the United States donate their weeded books to Better World Books for resale instead of discarding them.

This intricate process of weeding a library collection thus draws parallels to the meticulous care and attention required to cultivate a garden; like a garden, your library flourishes with the attention you give it. Further, the weeding process provides enduring benefits to library users while also responsibly managing the weeded books for reuse. The process of weeding is an important part of collection management and is your best option for keeping your collection up-to-date and most useful for your student users in the support of their classwork. Your faculty also benefit because they see their suggestions in the stacks and have the resources they need to support ongoing research.

Book Donations

The last topic for this chapter on collection development is book donations. While receiving donated items doesn't affect all libraries equally,

many library directors choose to include a gift book or donation section in their collection development policy. The main reason for having a book donation policy might be more to stem the tide of gift books that can easily overwhelm a small library. With limited time to sort donations and limited space, many libraries choose not to take gift books. For example, the collection development policy for my library states very clearly that the library does not accept donations and the only person who can override that is the library director. Having this in the collection development policy also protects library staff by giving them a ready answer should they be contacted about a book donation. Remember, if you choose to accept donations or gift books, you don't have control over what you get.

Over the years, I have thought often about creating a guide for people who want to donate books to my library. When people want to consider donating books to a library, I think it is essential for them to understand the various factors that influence whether or not their donation will be accepted and how it will be handled. Libraries, despite our appreciation for community contributions, must carefully weigh the costs and practicalities associated with book donations. Here are some reasons why you may agree with me and not eagerly accept your book donations.

There is a real cost to your library of materials and labor involved in processing and incorporating donated books into your library collections, which is a significant consideration. Tasks like cataloging, labeling, and barcoding can pose additional barriers to accepting donated materials. Additionally, the condition of donated books varies, with many showing signs of wear and tear. Although the books may be precious to the donor, they are often not in any condition to be circulated in a library. Libraries often receive unwanted books that may be outdated, damaged, or unsuitable for inclusion in their collections. Remember, you should already be doing regular weeding activities to remove books based on the same factors that may have prompted someone to donate the books to you in the first place.

As the library director you also have to prioritize community needs over sentimentality toward books. Most librarians, adopting a pragmatic approach, acknowledge that not all donations align with the library's mission and collection development policy. It's crucial to recognize that books are just one facet of library services, with librarians actively contributing to their seminary or institution through various programs and initiatives.

Furthermore, health concerns such as COVID-19 may prompt libraries to limit services and decline book donations to ensure the health and safety of library users and staff. Your potential donors need to understand these considerations and it may help donors appreciate the complexities involved in managing library collections and ensure that donated materials positively contribute to the library.

If you are considering taking donated books, it's crucial to communicate with the donor beforehand what you will take. Feel free to ask for books that are only in pristine condition, without tears, writing, and mold. Set a limit on how old a book can be by saying you only take books published in the last five to ten years. Then be clear if you will take textbooks or encyclopedias. Often these items are so out of date, they will be useless to your library. Finally, help the donor understand that donating a book to your library doesn't guarantee it will enter your library's collection. Books are given away or recycled based on the needs of your library.

A library's collection is the very essence of what the library is about and there is a great deal to know about collection development and collection management. Particularly for small library directors, there is added pressure to keep up with the latest trends. A resource I have found helpful for keeping up with the latest trends in academic libraries comes from PALNI, a consortium of twenty-four private academic institutions in Indiana. PALNI maintains a website on collection development as part of their faculty/librarian collaboration toolkit and features a page devoted to trends impacting collection development (PALNI 2023). Ultimately, you will develop your own set of resources that help you with collection development and collection management.

Case Study

The Jones Library serves a moderately-sized seminary from one of the mainline Protestant denominations. Due to financial issues, the seminary has decided to sell its campus and move into an office park several miles away, which is owned by a member of the seminary's Board of Trustees. Although this seems like a great deal for the seminary, for the Jones Library this move will be very disruptive. Packing and moving an entire library, although mostly

done by professional movers, means the library staff will have to reimagine the entire library in a downsized space.

To prepare for this move, the library director, John, and his staff need to come up with a plan both for the new space and for moving the library. Luckily, although John has been at the seminary for about a year, all three librarians on his staff have worked at the library for at least ten years. This gives John people he can turn to for conversations about the print collection and how the collection has been managed in the past. After having these conversations with his staff, everyone agreed that the first step needed to be a weeding of the books, particularly the reference section. John realized as he was working with his staff that the current collection development policy didn't cover weeding, but decided to work on that policy later, after the library had moved. He thought maybe he would get some ideas of what kind of weeding policy he wanted for the Jones Library as the library staff worked on the current weeding project.

After several more conversations with library staff members, John wrote a three-part plan to prepare the library to move to a new location in an office park. First, they would weed what they could from the existing collection. Second, John, who was responsible for collection development, would see if he could cut any journal subscriptions or standing orders because the new space was smaller. Lastly, John tasked his staff with looking into various DDA programs from some of the vendors already used by the library.

For the weeding project, John and his staff decided to use the American Library Association's MUSTIE. They thought there were enough misleading, ugly, superseded, trivial, irrelevant, or obtained elsewhere books in the collection to weed out and have a significant impact on the final number of books that had to be moved to the new location. Rather than use GreenGlass, the metadata librarian was able to run reports out of the library catalog on how often and the last time books were circulated. Another report identified multiple copies as well as books with more than one edition

on the shelf. With this approach, the library staff started pulling books from the collection.

For John, working on the journal subscriptions and standing orders was a lengthy task. Since he had only been in his position for about a year, John didn't have a history to draw from on what the previous director may have done with the journals. Similarly, the previous director had set up standing orders with multiple vendors, so John had to track down where all of the standing orders were coming from to assemble a fuller picture of what the library was receiving. After a few weeks of work on this project, John decided to cut the journal subscriptions in all languages except English and Spanish. After looking at enrollment information, John decided that having journals in German or French would not be used by students since they didn't know how to read in those languages. John's school also had a growing population of Spanish-speaking students, so keeping the Spanish language journal subscriptions made sense. Similarly, when examining the standing orders, John eliminated all orders that cost more than $50.00 per book. By using the circulation records already being used for the weeding project, John saw that the more expensive books in standing orders did not get nearly as much use as those under his $50.00 limit. While these two steps by John would have a positive impact on the library budget, they also tailored the book and journal collections to the needs of current students.

The result of the work by the reference librarian on DDA programs the Jones Library could consider yielded several options for John to consider. While it would have been easier for him to set a higher per-book spending threshold, instead John chose two DDA programs that each allowed for the library to approve every purchase request placed by a student or faculty member. Since the DDA programs were going to be new to the library, John wanted to see how many purchase requests were actually submitted and in what subject areas. This data would prove important going forward to see what new research topics the library might

need to collect books in as well as the budget impact of the DDA programs.

It would be nice to wrap up this case study by offering a happy ending that everything went smoothly. But since this is a hypothetical situation to help you imagine what you may have done if you were John, you can draw your own conclusions. If your library was faced with a similar move, what would you do? How would you work with your staff and the seminary administration to get ready for the move? Do you have criteria for decision-making like user statistics, budget impact, age of books in the collection, or duplicate copies? The point is that collection development and management is complicated. Tools like a collection development policy and weeding guidelines are very help-ful, but you will still need to interpret them and keep the policy as up-to-date as you can.

Key Points from Chapter 3

1. Collection Development Policy: A library's collection devel-opment policy serves as a guiding document that outlines the purpose, scope, and management of the collection. It can be customized to reflect the institution's mission, curriculum, and user needs. The policy should be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure alignment with evolving library objec-tives and community requirements.
2. Acquisitions and Vendor Management: Acquiring new materials for the library involves various tasks, including identifying items for purchase, researching pricing from vendors, placing orders, overseeing acquisitions, and man-aging budgets. Library directors or acquisitions librarians are responsible for implementing the collection development policy through effective vendor management and strategic purchasing decisions.
3. Weeding and Collection Management: Weeding, or dese-lection, is a critical aspect of collection management aimed at maintaining the relevance, quality, and accessibility of

the library's collection. Factors such as age, usage statistics, physical condition, and relevance to the curriculum guide the weeding process. Libraries must regularly assess and update their collections to ensure they meet the changing needs of users and align with institutional goals.

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Trudging through the Budget Bogs

***T**he library budget and funding the library can be a battlefield when the institution is running on a shoestring budget. For many small schools, the library is a major expense. As counterintuitive as it may sound, in business terms, the library lives on the liability or expense side of the budget balance sheet, not the asset side. In other words, the library costs money, it doesn't make money. What does this mean for the library director? How does a director decide what is important? How does the director make the case for the library budget with their administration? These are a few of the questions that directors need to wrestle with as they manage the library budget from year to year. Where should you start when it comes to the library budget?

How We Got Here

Before launching into much greater detail about how to manage your library's budget, I want to take a look back and see how libraries got to the point of being considered a major expense in seminary or

theological school budgets. In many institutions, the library often plays a central role and I have heard seminary presidents promote the library to potential students. Yet the observed decline in library funding as a percentage of total seminary expenditures may not be only based on the library losing a central role within the seminary or administrators neglecting the significance of the library. Opposing such assumptions about the library, the trend toward the library as an expense began in the early 1980s, the period before electronic journals, when card catalogs were still in use, and when computers were not used in libraries yet. But from the 1980s onward, computers, followed by the internet, and later online journals, e-books, and online databases, revolutionized library functions. Librarians embraced changes in their field, renovating reading rooms into computer classrooms and investing in electronic catalogs now known as library management systems. Librarians also adapted to becoming software and internet instructors, demonstrating active engagement with the evolving landscape. I know when I received my Master's in Library Science in the 1990s, library spaces were being transformed into computer classrooms where I taught classes in searching databases and using the internet for research. What is key to remember here is librarians have worked hard to adapt to changes in education at a rate much faster than faculty or school administrators. But librarians often don't get the credit they deserve.

The decline over these years in library expenditures by their institutions is a mixed story of success and failure. Libraries demonstrated success by living within their means, showcasing adaptability to new technologies, because librarians are often technology leaders on campus, and managing financial constraints. However, the failure lies in librarians not securing a larger share of the seminary budget at the same time. This isn't the fault of librarians, but rather the failure of theological education to keep up with the changing landscape of higher education. In my experience, librarians have often led their seminaries in the implementation of technology. While library material costs increased, library budgets remained relatively restrained when juxtaposed with the escalating expenses the seminary was seeing. There were and still are many factors in spending patterns, but there are real complexities in controlling costs on campus. Every seminary has to deal with multiple independent constituencies, varied budget priorities, and often the pursuit of prestige in order to attract students, all of which contribute to the challenges of managing expenses. On the other hand, librarians, with greater flexibility in cost control, can

adjust more readily compared to other departments facing challenges like faculty salary increases or a greater need for student scholarships. Although it doesn't change the present-day situation, understanding the decline in library funding requires considering broader school dynamics and financial pressures rather than a simpler interpretation of the library losing significance within the academic landscape.

Factors Affecting the Budget

Although it may feel like your budget is under attack every budget planning cycle, your library plays a crucial role as the guardian of your school's information resources. Sometimes the problem is as simple as the fact that library resources just cost more from year to year. For example, looking back over the last five to seven years of my library's budget, I cannot see where I asked for a significant increase in budget lines for electronic resources, books, or journal subscriptions. Yet the costs went up every year. The other item I have noticed about my library's budget over the same period is how close I have come to using all the money allocated without going over the budget line. It is a tricky process. I think if you look back at your library's budget over a five-year period, you may notice a similar trend. You will never have a large amount of money in your library budget, but how you spend your budget lines from year to year might be very different, and those differences will be obvious with any amount of money.

Another factor affecting your library's budget that may seem out of date is the global economic downturn, which started in 2008 and applied significant downward pressure on library funding. This reduction in funding, coupled with the persistent rise in the cost of scholarly information, prompted seminary administrators to closely scrutinize library expenditures and funding requests. That economic crisis exacerbated the existing issue of the growing cost of scholarly information compared to library funding. Shortly after I became a library director in 2017, I started meeting regularly with representatives from the companies I did business with regarding books and journals. Over about three years leading into the COVID-19 pandemic, I was told to expect academic book prices to rise by 8 percent, and serial prices to increase by 6 percent annually. This widening gap between information resource costs and the increase in seminary income, which according to my school's business office seemed to remain

around 2 percent annually, created a dilemma. My funding requests for increases in my annual budget, aimed at merely sustaining my spending power for library resources, faced routine rejection. This predicament forced many seminaries and others in academic libraries to make challenging choices between limiting library purchasing power annually or implementing cuts in other campus departments. I saw the direct consequence when I was asked to reduce the library budget by 5 percent every year, which worsened existing shortfalls and the loss of purchasing power.

The scarcity of funding for libraries and a growing demand for immediate access to an expanding universe of discoverable content by students and faculty means that effective management of your library's budget becomes vital. A well-designed budget should excel in supporting planning, monitoring, communication, and advocacy in your library so you can optimize the allocation of the limited funds in your budget. Unfortunately, many current academic library budget structures, including my own, fall short of meeting the support for a well-designed budget. As noted above, I think current seminary and higher education budgeting structures have not kept pace with the evolving landscape not only of academics but the costs of resources and the changing methods by which libraries acquire them. Further, I think as the educational landscape has shifted, librarians have done a much better job of understanding the cost of doing business than other administrators. This is particularly true for small library directors.

While there have been some incremental changes to the way budgets are structured from before due to the steady growth in the number and variety of e-resource acquisitions, the complexity introduced by content and price models has outpaced these changes. The temporary strategy of adding additional categories to the typical library budget may prove insufficient in the face of the complicated nature of modern acquisitions for library collections. I have found that most existing library budget structures struggle to provide accurate, efficient, and effective answers to basic budget questions, especially in the current environment where e-resources constitute the majority of what I seem to purchase. Every year when I enter a new budget cycle, I struggle with the old category headings that harken back to an earlier library. The two in my current budget are "Computer Catalog" and "Electronic Databases." These two categories probably fit an older version of my library, but they don't help me when I am paying fees for the online catalog which also includes access to certain databases. These categories also don't help me track the different types of electronic databases I

purchase such as full text vs. index vs. demand-driven acquisitions (DDA). There is a standing offer from the business office I work with to make changes to these budget line headings, but I am at a loss for how to structure my budget differently since the electronic resources landscape for libraries keeps shifting. My point is that the more accurately you can name your budget lines, the easier it is to track your expenses.

Some library directors are very familiar with budgets and accounting language. If that is you, congratulations, you are at the front of the line. Even if you are very good with your personal budget, doing the operational budget for a library can be much more complex particularly if money is tight. If you don't speak the language of budgets and finance, take the time to become financially literate. There are several good websites and books you can use to brush up on terminology to be able to "speak money" with your business office. Look for them in the Appendix. Your state library association might offer classes, workshops, or mentors that can help you understand more about your library's budget and how to build a budget. Also, if your school has a controller, sometimes called a lead accountant, that person can be very helpful in understanding the library budget since they oversee accounting activities. The controller can also usually supply you with information about previous library budgets to help guide you in forming a new budget. Finally, get to know your school's accounting staff well. They are a font of information and can often help you resolve issues with library vendors such as unpaid invoices.

The Budgeting Process

Your library budget is usually called an operating budget. An operating budget is a financial plan for your library, defining how you are going to spend your budget over a specified period, typically a fiscal year. This budget serves many purposes, beginning with helping you see a clear roadmap for financial activities. Your budget plays a crucial role in promoting transparency and effective communication within both the library and the greater school you serve. It serves to convey how resources are managed, fostering trust and understanding among various participants, including the business office, library staff, and vendors. One of the significant advantages of the operating budget for you lies in its ability to identify operational gaps. Through the budget creation process, you can pinpoint areas where cost savings

are possible or where additional money may be needed. This enables a more efficient allocation of resources from an already tight budget. I may be an outlier on this, but I like doing the yearly operational budget for the library. The process helps me see where the money is going and how I might be able to spend the budget better.

The budgeting process ensures that your financial decisions should align with your library's mission. By strategically deciding on operations that best advance the strategic plan, resources are directed toward core objectives, reinforcing the mission-driven nature of the library. Your library budget will drive what you can accomplish in any given year. Start by determining your school's fiscal year, which is usually July to June for most academic institutions. That means every year your budget starts over on July 1. You will also need to know your finance department's yearly budget planning cycle, which typically starts at least six months before the start of the new fiscal year. The budget planning cycle is when you estimate how much money needs to be in every budget line of the library budget for the upcoming year. This means I expect to receive a spreadsheet from my school's chief financial officer in January showing me the previous year's library budget, this year's library budget, and space for me to fill in next year's library budget. Sometimes there will also be instructions on how much I can spend or if I need to lower my budget by a certain percentage. There are also different types of budgets, but for the most part, you will be concerned with your library's operating budget. Your operating budget is the financial plan to cover the day-to-day expenses of running the library. Sometimes the day-to-day expenses might be called recurring expenses. You should also be aware that although operating budgets can include staff salaries and utilities, those expenses are typically set by the chief financial officer of your institution. I have never had control over salaries beyond giving advice on what a certain position should be paid. Thus, your operating budget will include budget lines for office supplies, professional development, technology, administrative expenses, and library collections. These are the main areas you need to worry about when you work on your budget.

A brief note about different budget types. In some institutions there can be up to four or more different types of budgets a library director needs to be involved in. Besides the operating budget, there may be a separate capital budget for things like renovations and furniture. There might even be a separate technology budget to buy new computers or printers, or a budget for library programs. In some cases, you may also be asked to separate the collection development budget

Managing a Small Theological Library

from the operating budget. It all depends on how the business office structures internal accounts and budget lines. In my current library, I have one budget that combines operating expenses with technology and collection development budget lines into one comprehensive budget for the library. I prefer this type of streamlined budget.

As mentioned above, the budget planning cycle usually starts six months or more before the end of the fiscal year when the chief financial officer or the controller sends out the budget worksheets. The library's budget worksheet is your opportunity to review the current budget and start planning for the next year. You may need to ask staff for their input, particularly if you have staff who manage their own budget lines like archives or electronic resources. Getting their insights on price increases or new projects for the coming fiscal year is crucial to preparing a budget. Once you have your new budget ready, you will need to submit it to the business office for approval. Be forewarned, there are usually deadlines for submitting your proposed budget and you may not get everything you ask for. Once the business office or the chief financial officer has signed off on your budget for the next fiscal year, you can start implementing that budget on the first day of that fiscal year, typically July 1.

Although the process sounds easy enough, other considerations factor into effective budget planning. First, you may want to compare your library to some of your peer institutions. The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) collects data from its member schools and seminaries annually. Their collection of Annual Data Tables, available at ATS.edu, includes in Table 3.5 salary information for library directors and library staff. Table 4.3 details the average expenditure per student and includes a line for the library. Table 4.4 gives the expenditures as a percent of total expenditures. This data is very helpful for making comparisons with other libraries. Second, you may want to have a conversation with some of your vendors about cost increases for the coming year. Remember, through these conversations I was able to glean how much my costs may go up for print books and journal subscriptions on a yearly basis. Sometimes vendors may send out projected increase information, usually in the form of an email, but if they don't, you can ask them. The usual amount for the increases is around 4–6 percent annually. Third, you may want to use the budget planning worksheet you will probably receive from your business office to see how much money you have spent in the current fiscal year. If they do not give you that information, ask for it by what is called YTD or year-to-date numbers. That way you can measure what you

spend over, say, a six-month period. You can also ask your business office for data on expenditures from past years to calculate how much your budget tends to go up from year to year for other budget lines. Fourth, consider combining budget lines or creating new budget lines to help you better track and use your library budget. Finally, use the budget worksheet to identify your priorities for the coming fiscal year. Do you want to spend more on electronic resources? Are you shifting from print books to more e-books? Taking these into account can help you get a more accurate budget worksheet and prepare you to answer questions during the budget approval process.

Although the budget planning cycle sounds easy if you have enough information and can estimate your expenses for the future, there are some pitfalls that may bog down your budget. One of the chronic issues in small libraries is that smaller institutions usually have budgets based on tuition. Unless your institution has a large endowment, chances are it is running on tuition dollars that can vary from year to year based on the size of enrollment. Let me explain this in a little more detail. Your seminary or school of theology employs various revenue-generating methods to sustain their budgets and provide educational services to students. One of those educational services provided is the library. One primary source of income is the tuition and fees paid by students pursuing their degrees. This financial contribution from students plays a pivotal role in covering the operational costs of academic programs, faculty salaries, and campus infrastructure. In addition to student contributions, colleges and universities have a longstanding tradition of relying on endowment funds to secure supplemental revenue. This practice has been in place for many decades and involves funds provided by donors. Donors contribute money to the institutions, often with specific restrictions on its usage, such as supporting an academic program, funding a construction project, student scholarships, or endowed chairs to secure the best faculty and fund research. Endowment funds, therefore, serve as a crucial financial resource that allows educational institutions to enhance and expand their offerings beyond what traditional budget allocations may cover. As you may imagine, generating revenue for higher education institutions like your seminary or graduate school becomes a challenging endeavor, particularly when faced with enrollment declines. Lower enrollment figures intensify the pressure on schools to explore innovative revenue streams, spend from their endowments, or compel them to make difficult decisions such as budget cuts, tuition increases, or, in extreme cases, closure.

Hopefully this overview helps you to understand better how your seminary or graduate school is funded. Not all of us are fortunate enough to work in a place with a large endowment from which to draw. The primary impact of working in a school that is tuition-driven is the financial strain of raising tuition and fees. While this move can help schools compensate for lost revenue due to a smaller student body, there is also the potential dilemma that a tuition hike might drive students to seek more affordable alternatives or even reconsider pursuing a graduate degree altogether. The decision to increase tuition, while addressing immediate financial concerns, must be carefully weighed against its potential impact on student enrollment and accessibility. Alternatively, lowering tuition rates is another option that institutions may consider. This approach aims to attract students seeking affordability, potentially boosting enrollment numbers. However, the challenge lies in balancing reduced tuition with the need to cover operational costs, and remember, the library is an operational cost. Striking the right balance becomes essential to ensure financial sustainability for tuition-driven schools. As you will learn as you work on your library's budget, the financial dynamics of higher education institutions are complex, and decisions regarding tuition adjustments have profound implications. The school your library serves needs to take a strategic approach that considers both short-term financial needs and the long-term goal of maintaining accessibility and affordability for students.

Strategies for Small Library Budgets

You may be asked to submit a budget with no increases or even cut the library budget by some percentage. With your costs always going up, how do you do that? When doing the library budget, I have three strategies I use with flat budgets and budget cuts. Flat budgets are when you are asked to submit a budget that doesn't have any increases. So, no more money for books, journals, or even supplies. Budget cuts are more obvious in that you will need to cut money out of your budget. Given these conditions, the first strategy I use is analyzing data to make decisions. For example, I ask my staff to keep spreadsheets on everything from library usage to database usage, and I consult circulation statistics. I am interested in knowing how many people use the library every day and how they are using the library. This helps me increase or decrease library hours, which in turn affects the number

of hours I need to pay students to staff the library. I also track database usage to see which databases are being used the most and how often. That way if I need to cut a database to stay within budget, I have the usage statistics to prove that the database wasn't being used. The logic of data-driven decision-making also helps me decide how to spend the collection development budget. I answer the perennial question of print vs. e-book purchases by looking at what gets the most use. I also use this logic to determine which journal titles to cut or add based on usage. Many libraries have also gone to using DDA to assist with e-book purchases, which I talked about in the previous chapter. Depending on your library, there may be other data you want to use to make decisions in the budgeting process.

My second strategy is using a spreadsheet to track monthly spending. Divided into months and budget lines, the spreadsheet lets me immediately see how much I have in each budget line as the fiscal year unfolds. The spreadsheet further helps me plan in case there is something special I want to buy, like a new database or e-book package. I find this particularly helpful for tracking professional development, which tends to be used most heavily at the end of the fiscal year. The spending spreadsheet also makes it very easy to reconcile any monthly or quarterly statements I receive from the business office. I even keep a spreadsheet of all my journal and standing order titles going back three years. The spreadsheet gives me both current and historical information that helps me plan for the next fiscal year. While I will admit keeping these spreadsheets can be time-consuming, the information I get from them is very helpful when determining if the library can do another flat budget or if I need to push for a slight increase in one budget line or another.

The third strategy I use for dealing with budget shortfalls is looking for programs and grants to accomplish a specific library need. In the past, I have used programs at the state level for training opportunities. Often these programs cover travel and participation, plus the library benefits from whatever knowledge is gained through the program. These programs have increased my knowledge of using data as well as refreshed my cataloging skills. Similarly, I am always looking for grants for professional development or to take on a project that is important to the library. In the past I have received grants for digital archives projects, rare book and archives evaluations, and rewriting library policies. Aside from investing my time in the grant application as well as the actual project, there has been no significant cost for the library to glean important work from the completion of the

grant. Finding grants and free or low-cost programs may seem like a time-intensive way to help with library budgeting, but these opportunities can help your library do projects that would always cost too much for the library budget.

Trudging through the budget bogs may be overwhelming at first, but over time you will develop methods of tracking your budget and estimating your costs from year to year. You can also learn valuable skills around collecting and working with data while at the same time helping your institution reduce costs. Even as you learn the language of budgets and accounting, you will also find ways to show the value of the library to your institution. As the library director, I have found the better I can speak the language of budgets and accounting, the better my relationship is with the financial services department of my school of theology.

Case Study

The seminary where Mary is the library director is facing a financial crisis. Enrollment is down and that means less tuition dollars for the operating budget. For the past two years, Mary was asked to submit a flat budget, which she managed to do by cutting the office supplies budget line and allocating less for conferences. However, not increasing the budget for collection development has meant fewer new books and certainly no new databases. This year, every department in the seminary has been asked to cut their budget by at least 5 percent and encouraged, if possible, to cut their budget by 8 percent. From Mary's perspective, that is a serious blow to the library's collections. Knowing that books and journals rise in cost between 6–8 percent per year, cuts to her budget of that magnitude means either eliminating her budget for conference attendance or she will need to cut the book budget by at least 10 percent.

Although the library budget isn't extravagant to start, Mary knows these things about her budget based on her own budget tracking and library usage data. First, Mary usually spends much of the book budget in the first six months of the fiscal year. That's because the first six months covers the book requests for the fall and spring semesters. There

is money left in that budget line for the rest of the year, but Mary needs to be more careful with buying books in the second half of the fiscal year. Second, the library seems to have a lot of standing orders and journals that don't get a great deal of use. Given what Mary needs to cut for next year, she is wondering if she can make some cuts there. Third, although it is expensive to travel, Mary benefits from attending conferences in person, so she doesn't want to cut the conferences line again. So where else can Mary find places to cut 5–8 percent out of her operating budget for the next year?

Following up on her previous observations and data on usage, Mary has decided to cut journals and standing orders. This will take some time and faculty involvement, but Mary thinks it is easier to add journals back into the collection later if she can increase her budget at some point. Mary can also work with some of her vendors to identify what standing orders her library is receiving and help her decide if those books are getting used by students and faculty. Mary can also look at the formats she is receiving journals in and look through available databases the library might subscribe to. Increasingly, library databases have full-text journals, so a library could potentially stop subscribing to the print version and rely on the digital version from a database. Mary isn't sure she wants to use that option too heavily because there is always the chance that the database doesn't have the latest issues of a journal. But it is certainly an idea to think about. Another idea that she had, based on library usage, was to trim the hours the library was open, so she didn't have to pay as much in student worker wages. Since enrollment is down, there are fewer students who need to use the library. Mary wonders what would happen if the library closed at 8 p.m. instead of 10 p.m., and was only open on Saturdays instead of the whole weekend. Even though the salary and benefits portion of the library budget are not directly controlled by Mary, there is always the possibility of saving money by reducing costs that way.

The question remains if Mary will make enough cuts to reach the seminary's budget reduction goals for next year. There are other lines to cut, such as the electronic resources budget line, or the office supplies line could get another cut. Although probably the largest two lines in her whole budget, the books and journals lines don't always have to be cut to make the budget work. If you were faced with the same circumstances, how would you cut the library budget? Would you use a data-driven model of usage, or would you choose other metrics? Have you discovered other areas within your own budget that can be cut? There are many, many options for you to decide from when creating a budget and then living within the budget.

Key Points for Chapter 4

1. Understanding Financial Dynamics: Libraries often face financial constraints, especially in institutions with limited budgets. The library is typically seen as an expense rather than a revenue generator. Directors need to navigate this reality by understanding the financial dynamics of their institution, including tuition-driven funding models and the impact of economic downturns on library budgets.
2. Strategic Budgeting: Effective budget management involves strategic decision-making and resource allocation. Library directors should leverage data-driven insights to make informed decisions about budget priorities, such as investing in electronic resources based on usage statistics or seeking alternative funding sources through grants and programs.
3. Financial Literacy and Advocacy: Library directors must develop financial literacy to effectively manage budgets and communicate the value of the library to stakeholders. This includes understanding budgeting terminology, building relationships with accounting staff, and advocating for adequate funding to support the library's mission and strategic objectives.

Service with a Smile

*A*t the heart of libraries is a dedication to service. Presumably as library users ourselves, each of us has walked into a library and looked for the librarians staffing service desks where we can get our questions answered. Librarians give classroom presentations on any number of research and library usage topics while at the same time facilitating student learning by helping students find the resources they need to be successful in the classroom. Many times I have crawled through the stacks trailed by a student looking for a book or picked up the phone and gone through the steps with a student on how to find a book in the online catalog. These are no small lifts for librarians. It is interesting to see how all libraries are evolving in the 21st century, adapting their internal structures to better serve patrons and communities. Some have made a shift towards flatter organizations and others have reevaluated traditional management roles to reflect a broader trend seen in corporate settings like Google and Amazon where innovation is key. While our libraries might not be the size of corporate giants, librarians in small settings are still as innovative and creative at serving their users.

In recent years, the focus on strategic functions like equity and inclusion, outreach, and community engagement highlights a commitment to meeting the diverse needs of library users. In my own library, I purposefully brought back student workers as an effort to emphasize the importance of building relationships with library users and actively involving students in shaping library priorities. I happened to be in my library on a Saturday and watched while the international student staffing the library answered questions and helped other students from the library sofa, not from behind the access services desk. After some library remodeling, we placed chairs at the main service desk so students could sit and have a conversation with a librarian. For me this was the embodiment of "customer experience," and the change from always operating behind a desk demonstrated a dedication to providing user value while ensuring efficient library operations. The emphasis on "human-centered design" being used in many retail and online settings demonstrates how libraries have changed to meet the needs of their users and underscores a commitment to creating meaningful experiences for both staff and library users.

The concept of being a "learning organization" with a focus on lifelong learning is noteworthy to me as well. Although academic libraries have always been used by learners, I have seen the emphasis on lifelong learning become much more prominent over the past fifteen years or so. Academic libraries, like their public library counterparts, are also focused on more than helping a student get through their academic program or answering that one question. Rather, we focus on building life skills that students can use to meet their research needs long after they have graduated. I think it indicates a commitment to ongoing development and adaptation. Libraries are not only places for library users to learn, but are also fostering a culture of continuous learning among their staff. Overall, this suggests that academic libraries are embracing innovation, community involvement, and a customer-centric approach to remain relevant and valuable. But what is driving these changes and how will they affect your ability to serve your library users? I want to suggest four trends that highlight the changing landscape of academic libraries and the roles of librarians in the coming years that will impact your staffing needs.

Trends in Library Services

First, there is the shift to internet-level services. What I mean by that is: information tools are becoming more powerful and user-friendly, moving from commercial products like databases provided by libraries to freely available searching services accessible to anyone with an internet connection. Google, Google Scholar, Wikipedia, and similar tools have become the norm, making information easily accessible. This shift to internet-level services in the area of information tools is notable for the implications on how individuals access and retrieve information. Think of it this way: When was the last time someone walked into your library looking for something written down on a piece of paper? Information tools are evolving to be more powerful and user-friendly on handheld devices like phones and iPads. This means that individuals, regardless of their technical expertise, can easily navigate and utilize these tools to find information. In fact, a litmus test for many websites is how well the website functions on a mobile device. You might be faced with a need to staff your library with people who are adept at working not only across software platforms like Apple or Android, but also across device size and Wi-Fi connectivity strength.

There is also a transition from commercial products that are bought by libraries to free or low-cost services. The longer I work in libraries (just over thirty years at the writing of this book), the more I experience a notable move away from relying on commercial products like databases provided by libraries. Instead, the trend is toward leveraging freely available internet-level services such as Wikipedia. This shift is driven by the accessibility and convenience of these services, as well as the desire for information to be more widely available. As mentioned previously, I think this model of accessibility is seen in Google, Google Scholar, and Wikipedia. These platforms and many more are widely recognized for their accessibility and continue to play a central role in how people expect to access information and the accuracy of the information people find. Further, this leads to universal internet accessibility. The expectation of our library users is that everything they need will be accessible if they are connected to the internet. This also reflects the increasing global connectivity and the idea that information should be available to a broad audience, transcending geographical and institutional boundaries. The overarching goal is to make information easily accessible. Users are

expected to rely on these internet-based services as primary sources for obtaining a wide range of information, from general knowledge to scholarly resources, and your library staff will need to find their place in these services. It also poses challenges and opportunities for libraries to adapt their roles and services in response to the changing information landscape.

A second shift has been the increasing amateurism of information skills. Almost everything is searchable via Google or Bing or some other search engine, and this drives the simplification and increased accessibility of information tools, information-finding, and evaluation skills. Teaching people how to find and evaluate information used to be the realm of the classroom and the library. Now this is shifting from being primarily practiced by librarians to becoming a mass amateur activity. I cannot count the number of times I have read student research found using a Google search for random websites. For many years, I have struggled to teach more about how to evaluate what you find on the internet versus finding information on the internet. Anyone can find something on the internet, but is what you found actually true? Is your found information something you can use in a scholarly or academic paper? As librarians, we may think we are teaching information skills, but unfortunately, we don't have any way to measure if what our students find on the internet is really what they are looking for and if that source is reliable. There is a false independence at work here as students conflate their ability to do a Google search with being able to do actual library database research. If teaching information skills is not something you are good at, you may need to staff your library with others who can teach widely, to help students be capable of finding information independently.

Third, open scholarship continues to grow in importance. Despite resistance from commercial publishers, the economic advantages of open scholarship are compelling. For example, this book is being published by an open press and will be freely available for download. I made the choice to use an open press in order to get the information to as many interested people as possible. Yes, it means I won't be making money on the sale of each book, but at least librarians in small libraries will have a book tooled to their unique needs. The continued growth of open scholarship is a significant trend that reflects changes in the way scholarly content is produced, disseminated, and accessed. What does this mean for your library? The persistence of open scholarship will mean scholarly research and resources that might otherwise be in a library database are now freely available for your students and

Managing a Small Theological Library

faculty. While the approach promotes accessibility, collaboration, and the sharing of knowledge without financial barriers, it does lead to resistance from commercial publishers. No business likes to lose money. This means traditional publishing models, which often involve paid access to academic journals and publications, are facing challenges as open scholarship gains momentum. Publishers accustomed to traditional revenue models are resistant to the shift. There could also be disadvantages for faculty, some of whom rely on income from their publishing efforts.

While all of the open scholarship and access to scholarly content eliminates subscription fees and allows a broader audience to benefit from research findings, there is still a downside. The efforts to democratize knowledge and make it accessible to a global audience still favors countries and areas with a more highly developed infrastructure and access to the internet. Even if this shift reduces the necessity for libraries to purchase certain materials and more scholars and researchers increasingly opt for open-access publishing models, does that ensure global accessibility of research and academic knowledge? While scholars, students, and the public can benefit from freely available scholarly content, in turn fostering a more inclusive and collaborative research environment, there is still an impact on the students who may use your library. Your ability to staff your library with librarians who can keep themselves updated on these trends in scholarship and the ongoing transformation in scholarly communication will have an impact on how best to serve your library's users.

Fourth, I think libraries and librarians will increasingly dedicate their time and efforts to supporting users in creating knowledge rather than just consuming it. This involves assisting researchers and students in archiving and making scholarly results accessible. The role includes developing and supporting repositories, contributing to open-access publishing initiatives, and engaging in efforts related to digital humanities, and evolving forms of publishing, which may require new skill sets. Overall, these trends suggest a transformation in the traditional roles of academic libraries and librarians, emphasizing the importance of adapting to new technologies, fostering information literacy at a mass level, embracing open scholarship, and actively participating in knowledge creation and dissemination.

Facing Challenges to Library Services

Let us be realistic, since this book is being written specifically for small library directors and solo librarians. When your school cuts degree programs, what happens to the library? The obvious answer is nothing good. With budget deficits and enrollment management being the driving forces behind program cuts, the library faces challenges in maintaining its services and fulfilling its mission. The reduced academic programs and certificates may result in decreased demand for certain resources, leading to potential budget reductions for library acquisitions and staffing. Also, the library's ability to support revised curricula and meet the evolving needs of students and faculty may be jeopardized. The library may struggle to provide relevant study materials, research assistance, and specialized resources that align with the school's ever-changing programs. There are many additional scenarios that could be conjured up that could affect the budget of the library, as I explored in Chapter 4, and will certainly impact your ability, as the library director, to offer services to your students and faculty.

Providing quality services takes a toll on librarians. As painful as it is for library directors, some prefer to cut back on services rather than spread themselves and their staff too thin. The reality is you just cannot split yourself into too many jobs. If you are working on updating databases then need to mentally shift over to answering a reference question or offer instruction for a class, and then switch to collection development, it is pretty crazy-making. You just can't do it all. As was explored in Chapter 2, some directors intentionally write job descriptions and hire librarians to cover more than one area, such as one person to cover electronic resources and library instruction. Even with the odds stacked against them, directors need to find solutions that work.

The most obvious solution is to try and preserve as many staff positions in the library as possible knowing that, no matter what, you are going to need people to keep the library running. A second solution also suggested in another chapter, is to downsize journal and book collections particularly around programs or subject areas no longer taught. With just the changes I have seen during my six years at my current library, I have cut well over fifty journal titles along with a dozen or more standing book orders, all for subject areas or languages no longer being taught. I have even shifted to a much more English language collection to reflect the loosening of a language requirement

in the degree programs that now only requires proficiency in a Biblical language for students in Old or New Testament studies. Otherwise, a modern European language is no longer required. The way I see the issue is that if those subject areas or languages are no longer required, then library staff shouldn't have to supply those resources. A trickier problem is which library services to offer when your staff is small and your options are limited. What follows in this chapter are suggestions on how to offer library services to students and faculty with the staff and resources you may have.

In light of the four trends discussed above, the first thing to think about when you offer library services on a shoestring is: What can I automate? There are great tech solutions out there that can free your staff to concentrate on other aspects of serving your user community. Here are four ideas I have implemented around this issue. An idea I carried over from a previous position into my current environment is to automate as much as I can. Since library catalog and database access is vital to serving the students and faculty, the tech solution of using Active Directory, a Microsoft product to tie OpenAthens for database authentication and the library catalog Alma/Primo together to offer a single sign-on environment has been very helpful for students, faculty, and the library staff. This means that my students and faculty use their email address and password to log into library resources. This may look different in your library, since all integrated library systems are not alike, but I know the idea works. Single sign-on is not a new idea and has been around colleges and universities for several years. But since smaller schools and libraries seem to lack the necessary information technology infrastructure, they have been slow adopters of this technology. The time-saving factor is that the school IT department manages authentication issues with twenty-four hours a day tech support. Also, data feeds from existing student information systems require very little library staff intervention to maintain patron records in the integrated library system. Plus, it is popular with students and faculty because they only need to remember one login, which is usually based on their institutional email address to gain access to library resources. My staff focuses on helping students use the electronic resources instead of fixing their login problems.

A second idea implemented in my library is old but reliable: using videos and online guides to teach students how to use library resources. Information literacy has been in libraries for decades and libraries have transitioned from using paper instruction guides to online resources such as LibGuides to give students access to resources whenever the

students need them. These can also help address some of the amateur-ish information skills your library users have. A valuable aspect of creating and maintaining these resources is their effectiveness and adaptability. You can put them on the library website, embed them in online classes, and even turn them into handouts if you are teaching a class. These resources are also very shareable, particularly if you put videos on a common platform like YouTube. Having instructional materials available for your students and faculty frees library staff time and increases the independence of students to learn on their own schedules.

A third idea I implemented is doing away with traditional reference service with set hours at a reference desk. Instead, with a lot of the initiative coming from library staff, an appointment system was set up through an online form. Students or faculty specified preferred days and times as well as the preferred form, in person, via telephone, via Zoom or Google Meet, or via email. These appointments are very helpful to students living off campus or who take classes in a hybrid or asynchronous format. This idea works because librarians are no longer tied to a traditional reference desk with set reference hours and don't even have to be in the library except for in-person appointments. Then a service desk at the front of the library can be staffed by one librarian who serves walk-in library users as well as checks out library materials as needed. This has further spawned a common calendar for the library to track when the librarians will actually be on campus. As long as one librarian will be on campus each day to cover the hours the library is scheduled to be open, then other librarians are free to work elsewhere. This change in a traditional library service has been a winning solution for my small library staff.

The final idea is to take advantage of a feature in my library's integrated system to offer a fulfillment service. Begun during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is called the automated fulfillment network or AFN. Besides connecting my library to others in a consortium system, during the pandemic the AFN was turned on for local lending. A fulfillment service is any service that helps your library fulfill an online order. This means students and faculty can "order" the books they want, and a librarian will pull the books and leave them on a table in front of the library for pick up. This work can also be done by student workers or paraprofessionals depending on your staffing situation. While sometimes it is a bit labor intensive if there are too many requests, I have found a librarian can still track if library users need help at the service desk while at the same time being in the stacks pulling

the books that have been ordered. The AFN also allows students and faculty to pick up books when they can, not when the library is open. Thus, everyone gets their needs met and I can staff the library with fewer people and shorter library hours. This may not make sense in your setting, but there are other solutions out there.

Taking advantage of readily available technology allows for steady library hours designed around when the most students are likely to use the library but with the minimum staffing required. Students can also get their needs for reference or instruction help met at times that fit their schedule to the extent possible with librarian availability. There is also minimal extra cost to the library for providing services this way. The IT department at my library already had the infrastructure in place to support a single sign-on solution, and you may also find that this is the case for your institution. Using LibGuides does have an annual fee, but there are other options like using PDFs on the library website to convey the same information. All faculty and staff at my institution have access to Zoom and Google Meet, and students seem comfortable with the platforms. Lastly, the library already pays yearly fees for the integrated library system and using the AFN lets us get more value from those fees.

There are many more technology solutions that small libraries have implemented to better serve their users. My library has experimented with chat clients on our website but found through trial and error that our students prefer to make appointments with librarians. So, we discontinued using chat reference. Something else I am considering is a self-checkout station for students to check out their own books when they leave the library. There are some costs involved, so implementing this technology will require another budget adjustment. Using technology judiciously can definitely help small library directors optimize serving library users whether they are physically in the library or using the library online. Even with limited resources, taking advantage of what is already available can save money and accomplish the task at hand.

Merging Library Services

Finally, beyond the four trends and some of the ideas I shared to implement them in your library, there is the idea often seen in large academic libraries of the merged organization. While some might view

simply merging the reference department with the circulation desk as a merged organization, this type of organizational merging goes beyond the library. The concept of merging libraries and computer centers creates organizations sometimes referred to as "merged information services organizations." These have been explored by such organizations as liberal arts colleges. But as colleges justify the decision to merge departments and determine the benefits of these mergers, there are some challenges associated with this type of organizational change.

On some college campuses, one of the reasons for pursuing the merger is to enhance service to faculty and students. This involves providing better technology and information support and effectively implementing new technology to meet the evolving needs of users. You may see it through something called the information commons model, where students can get technical support as well as library services and sometimes even writing assistance, all by coming to the library. For the college, the merger aims to achieve increased efficiencies and greater organizational flexibility in terms of budget and staff. Combining resources from libraries and computer centers can lead to more streamlined operations. For some, merging libraries and computer centers is seen as a way to improve the visibility of services and enhance the reputation of the campus. The consolidated organization may present a more unified front to students and faculty, thus increasing the impact on learning. Sometimes the merger can be seen as contributing to the evolution of a new information profession. This involves encouraging and supporting campus technical leadership and fostering increased staff cooperation. I think this model is appealing to colleges and universities because it fits well into the organizational structure of the school and combines the ever-increasing technology of the library with the computer and information technology resources on campus.

I talked in a previous chapter on staffing about how I merged areas under the heading of public services and then added educational technology to the department as well. While this may be a first step in the process for some theological institutions, other seminaries have made a greater merge towards a true information commons model. In one instance I know of, while not all of the departments were merged into the same building, library staff, the writing center, educational technology, and the information technology department all reported to the director of the library. For the school, the merger increased efficiency because the library was a major user of technology. What had been separate departments was now under one person who could

ensure a coordinated effort was in place to help students and faculty. But what does it take to make this type of merger happen?

Mergers, even if done for all the right reasons such as increased efficiency, still need someone who thinks the merger is a really good idea. That champion of the merger for your campus could be you. If your school is in a place where a departmental merger is happening, there are three things you need to keep in mind. First, merging the cultures of computing and library organizations is a gradual process that necessitates a significant staff development program. Second, there may be challenges related to maintaining focus among the people involved in the merger. Particularly when a student comes to the reference desk with IT needs, your staff needs to clearly understand who does what and who can help that student the best. Third, looking at the history of merged organizations shows that such mergers are generally driven from the top down, meaning the dean or the president might be implementing these mergers. While there are examples of merged computer or IT help and reference desks in some libraries, each of these might still be separate units reporting to the library director.

In summary, the merging of departments such as information technology (IT) and the library are seen as effective for delivering information resources and services, but its successful implementation requires careful consideration of cultural differences, a dedicated champion, and ongoing staff development. This strategy also means the presence of non-MLS/MLIS professionals may bring about cultural differences that need to be addressed. Similar to the challenges from Chapter Two, you, as the library director, need to understand how students use your library and who is best to address their questions. While it may seem overly detail-oriented, I want a librarian addressing research questions and an IT professional helping with computer issues even if they are both staffing a common service desk. Having clear lines of communication for everyone involved will help overcome the internal changes that restaffing or merging might bring up even if you are trying to improve library services. Librarians have a dedication to service and you may be forced to be creative in providing services to your users in your small library. Hopefully the above suggestions will jump-start your thinking on how you want to serve your library community.

Case Study

At a small seminary library serving about one hundred students, Rosemary the library director has a problem. When the library was built several years ago, enrollment was much higher and many of the students studied in the library. But like many seminaries, enrollment has been going down over the years and more students are choosing to live in the community rather than on campus. Although Rosemary has had to reduce library staffing by a couple of positions, what has not changed is the physical space of the library. There is still the traditional reference desk along with an equally sized circulation desk. Having two service desks has set up a problem, namely which desk should Rosemary assign staff to cover? She has already taken some steps to find a solution that works for both the library staff and the seminary students.

Rosemary's first step was to do a two-part user survey. One part was a quick online, anonymous survey emailed to all students, faculty, and staff asking them where they went in the library for help when they needed it. The other part of the user survey was to keep statistics on how many times students, faculty, and staff came up to each desk and the reason they came to the desk. Equipped with this information, her second step was to ask her staff for recommendations. Because her staff covers these two desks more than she does, Rosemary thought it was really important to give them some ownership in the decision-making process. Finally, after doing some research on merging departments in academic libraries, Rosemary looked at three departments in her seminary that might be a good fit for merging into the library. Those departments were the IT department, the writing center, and student services.

After pulling together all of her survey data and research, Rosemary concluded that she had four options for staffing her library. The first option was to leave everything the way it was, with two separate desks but maybe hire some more student workers to cover the circulation desk if the

budget allowed. But for Rosemary, this option didn't change anything, and she felt it wouldn't improve services to her library users. The second option was to consolidate the two service desks into one desk. To her, the most obvious move was to permanently close the reference desk since that desk was located further into the library and was harder for students to access. With only one desk to staff, Rosemary could put together a schedule that gave library staff more time away to work on other projects and made it easier for students and faculty to ask all of their questions in one place. It didn't solve the problem of what to do with the old reference area and this option meant training paraprofessionals to take on new service roles by improving their ability to answer reference questions. Rosemary saw that another advantage to the second option was that she would finally get to cross-train her staff in other positions to help cover vacations and other staff absences. The third option Rosemary came up with was to ask if the IT department, the writing center, or student services were interested in moving into the library. While the writing center and student services departments were both very interested, the IT department decided to stay where they were. The IT department manager felt there was too much computer equipment and too many people to fit comfortably in the library. After considering those three options, Rosemary came up with a fourth option. She thought about closing both service desks and instead offering reference by appointment and installing self-service checkout stations for students to check out their own books. In some ways this felt like the most radical option to Rosemary, but it would completely free up her staff to rethink how they worked in the library.

What does library service look like in your library? How do you staff to meet the needs of your seminary or school of theology? What from this case study resonates with you? If you were Rosemary, which of the four above options would you choose for your library? There are many other options Rosemary could choose from and it will be up to you, as the library director, to undertake a similar process in figuring out how to best serve your library users.

Key Points from Chapter 5

1. Adaptation and Innovation: Libraries are deeply committed to serving their user communities. Thus libraries are constantly evolving to better serve their users by adopting flatter organizational structures, focusing on equity and inclusion, and implementing human-centered design principles to create more meaningful user experiences. Examples of this include providing conversation areas and moving away from the traditional reference desk.
2. Technological Integration: The rise of powerful, user-friendly information tools like Google and Wikipedia is transforming how users access information. As a result, in libraries there is a shift towards free or low-cost information services. These changes necessitate a need for library staff who are skilled in various technologies and platforms, ensuring efficient access to information.
3. Emphasis on Lifelong Learning: Libraries are not only supporting academic success but also focusing on building lifelong learning skills for users and fostering continuous learning among library staff to adapt to new trends and technologies. Further, the growth of open-access publishing is democratizing knowledge but also challenging traditional publishing models and potentially impacting faculty income from publishing. This has led libraries to support users in creating knowledge, involving new roles in developing repositories for the created knowledge, supporting digital humanities, and contributing to open-access initiatives.
4. Strategic Resource Management: Facing budget cuts and program reductions, libraries are adopting creative solutions such as increased automation of library services, merging with IT departments to enhance service efficiency, and offering new service models to maintain quality services with limited resources.

Managing a Small Theological Library

Flying Solo

There are many different types of librarians and many different job situations. Sometimes library directors may find themselves in a situation where they are the solo librarian, which means you are the only professional librarian and often you work alone. If that is your situation, you are in charge of all aspects of the library. Solo librarians are the air traffic controllers of the library world. Playing a crucial role, they act as multitasking professionals who handle various responsibilities. They act as the central coordinators, fulfilling faculty and professional commitments, while at the same time doing collection development, special collections, facilities management, technical services, and even managing staffing if they have student workers or volunteers assisting them. If you are a solo librarian, you may be doing several things at once and there are many challenges in being a solo librarian. You are responsible for doing everything. From acquisitions and cataloging to processing, to circulation, you are a one-person technical services office. You will also provide reference and instruction and set policies and procedures for the library. Solo librarians provide essential support and services to numerous students in their academic pursuits. There is no good way to say it, but this is

a big job. In my conversations with solo librarians from theological education, each noted that they perform the functions of every library department on a slightly smaller scale and to the best of their abilities. I have gleaned a number of best practices and tips that each of them uses to serve the students and faculty of their school. The rest of this chapter will focus on what I learned from solo librarians within theological education and in other academic settings.

So where do you start as a solo librarian? The first thing you need to remember is every school or seminary is different. It is essential to recognize and acknowledge this fact. Even if you are aware of another library facing a similar situation, it is important to remember that the librarian in that case is working with a distinct administration and a different collection of books compared to your own. Understanding that your school is different also helps when someone in your administration or faculty wants to compare your library or the services you offer to another library. Just because the library down the street can offer twice as many databases as you and longer hours, it does not mean that you can be compared to them. You are only one person with your own set of unique skills. Some librarians choose the path of solo librarianship, working independently in various settings. In my conversations, some of the solo librarians found it very rewarding to work alone, but it comes with challenges, both budgetary and organizational. The need to handle all library responsibilities alone makes it necessary for the solo librarian to build a network and create their own professional support system. But feeling isolated in the profession is a common experience for many solo librarians despite their passion and dedication; having other librarians to talk to is something you may want to make an early goal of your work.

When you are the only librarian, you will be faced with many different priorities that can overlap and be overwhelming at times. You may have no idea what to do first. Do you work on tutorials? Do you work on collection development? How about cataloging the pile of new items? Since you cannot do everything at once, you are going to need to have good time management skills. Back in Chapter 1, I talked about strategic planning. This is very important for solo librarians. Just like in a library that has a small staff, you are going to need to be able to set goals you can accomplish with a clear plan and measures to check your progress. This is your version of strategic planning. Also, because you are on your own, do the best you can to break each goal down into steps. Each of those steps can become a benchmark for achievement and help you measure your overall progress. Sometimes

it will be hard for you to step back and realize you have actually been moving forward in pursuit of your goals because you may have to move slowly. But you are making progress. What makes good goals for a solo librarian? Looking toward serving your students and faculty, you could set goals about the number of students you help in a given month or semester. You can also look at your circulation statistics to measure from year to year the number of books you are handling. Keep statistics on anything and everything that will help you demonstrate how much you actually accomplish, especially around your goals.

What I did when I first became a library director was determine what I wanted to do in the first year. My goal was to make a list of all the library projects I could identify that needed to be done even if the list was very long. That list included books that needed to be moved, conversations I needed to have with faculty and students about library usage, and the early implementation of a system to keep usage statistics. Then I made a separate list of larger projects. I defined larger as anything that might take more than a year or might require more than one person to accomplish. For the larger projects, I included creating a library manual of how the library worked, evaluating the school archives (which were in the library), and consolidating all of the journal subscriptions under a single vendor. I am sure there are a number of things I left off the lists, but you get the idea. While this may sound like a lot of work, it is very important to be organized so you can manage your time well. Remember, you are working solo, so you need to manage your time to get everything done. Also, having lists or a plan will help you communicate what you are doing to your school's administration. In my experience, when it looks like I'm not making progress, having a list helps keep the dean from asking too many questions about what I am doing. I also keep a running to-do list that I update every two or three weeks so that important deadlines don't slip by, and I use a calendar on my iPhone that syncs with the library's calendar and the school's academic calendar so I can keep track of meetings. All of this helps me manage my time effectively as well as my progress on projects even when I have a staff.

Tips for Time Management

Because there are many ways to manage your time, here are a few additional tips you might find helpful or consider integrating into your

time management system. You may want to try time blocking, which is designating blocks of time for different tasks. For example, you could set aside certain hours from your week for each of your tasks such as reference and instruction and another block for cataloging. Although I have never been a solo librarian, I set aside a certain number of hours each week to attend to paying the library bills and another block of time to work on collection development. In another position I held, I frequently looked at book catalogs or created instruction materials while I was covering the reference desk. That way when the desk wasn't busy, I was still making good use of that block of time. Should you have student workers or volunteers you can train, you can also block out time each week to work with them directly. If you are a solo librarian, time blocking helps you make sure that each part of your job receives dedicated attention.

Some solo librarians might try a prioritization model in their work. This model helps to arrange tasks based on urgency and importance. The way I think about this model is it may help you identify high-priority tasks first while still addressing your long-term goals. This also leads to regularly assessing your goals and priorities. You can set up a schedule that works for you, which could be monthly or even quarterly. As I mentioned previously, I keep a running to-do list, and that is a good place for me to be able to prioritize what's urgent and keep track of how I am moving forward on my goals. Using regular assessments also allows you to see what is working well, where you need to improve, and if you need to adjust your long- or short-term goals.

You may be starting to ask yourself, do I really need all of this structure? What about when emergencies happen? While you alone know the library you are managing and the issues you are facing, I find it far easier to work with seminary administrators when I have a plan in place, which includes time management. But there are two other elements that go along with all of the planning. While having a structured plan is essential, it's also crucial to be flexible. Emergencies happen and unexpected tasks arise, so leave some room in your schedule for flexibility and adjustments. If you have volunteers, student workers, or non-library colleagues, consider delegating tasks that can be handled by others. Over the years, even with a small library staff, I have used student workers and volunteers to re-folder archival collections, cover the library's night and weekend shifts, reshelve books, answer phones, and so on. Think about how much of the daily work, like checking in returned books, you can delegate to a student worker with minimal training and detailed instructions. Although these people may not be

trained as librarians, they still have skills and enthusiasm to help you get projects done and substitute for you in certain situations. Thus, as a solo librarian, you might think about how you could train students or volunteers to do some of the work a library paraprofessional might do. All of this is to build needed flexibility into your own schedule.

Another way to take some of the pressure off of yourself as a solo librarian is to see what other departments around your seminary or school you can get to help you in the library. For example, can your IT department manage some or all of the library's technology needs? Is there a way to automate library systems so any student getting an ID card from the registrar is automatically registered for a library card at the same time? In the previous chapter, I suggested the IT department could be merged with the library. But the decisions you make about working with other departments are specific to your situation. Anything you can do to lighten your workload allows you to focus on higher-priority responsibilities, which may be very different from a library with more staff. By combining your existing system with these additional tips, you can continue refining and optimizing your approach to achieve even greater efficiency and effectiveness in your role as a solo librarian. In my conversations with solo librarians about where they work, each has come to recognize that several things completely outside of their control placed limits on them. There was always way too much work to accomplish. So more than being realistic about the workload, having good time management skills and a structured approach to their work helped each of them better understand how to pace themselves. This also better prepared them for keeping up their daily work and tackling the to-do list.

Something else to consider is telling administrators and faculty "no," a word they seldom like to hear. No one wants to say they cannot accomplish a goal or task, but as solo librarians I have had conversations with noted, once they were able to acknowledge and accept their limits, each knew that it wasn't because they weren't trying that everything wasn't getting accomplished. Not having enough time for everything was just how it was and there wasn't anything the solo librarians could do about it. Some of the solo librarians suggested focusing on what's coming through the door. When faced with myriad tasks, focus on the most immediate of the needs. This may sound simplistic, but remember, there isn't anyone else you can hand tasks off to. You are it. The more realistic you are and focused on what issues are at the door, the more you can communicate with both faculty and students as well as administrators about library needs and your limited time.

Staying Connected as a Solo Librarian

If you find yourself as a solo librarian feeling less motivated because your daily tasks take priority over your passion for being a librarian, you are not alone. To counter this, incorporate ways to stay connected to other librarians outside of the library on a regular basis. I try to make monthly lunch or coffee dates with other librarians at small libraries to have another library director to talk with about running a library. Sometimes even a Zoom call or FaceTime chat with another librarian can help me. Additionally, stay informed through subscribing to listservs, forums, blogs, library news, and online journals. I start my day reading the headlines of the various lists and forums I have subscribed to. Though I seldom read everything, I like to scan the headlines in case something I am interested in catches my eye. Taking classes or workshops can also keep you connected to what is going on outside of your library. All of this helps me maintain a broader perspective and not get lost in the daily tasks. Even social media platforms like Facebook and TikTok help communication with other librarians, enabling me to feel connected even in an isolated setting. Make sure you get connected to other library professionals locally, regionally, or virtually.

Closely connected to staying in touch with other librarians is professional development. Active engagement within library associations can truly diminish the feelings of personal and professional isolation. You need to schedule time for professional development into your overall time management plan. In fact, if you don't put professional development into your strategic plan or short-term goals, you probably will not do any professional development. Be aware that in many theological libraries, time and funding can limit your ability to do professional development. As I mentioned previously, staying connected with others is virtually free, so that is a start. But what is more difficult for the solo librarian is getting time off to attend conferences as well as finding the necessary funding. My preference is to attend at least one in-person conference a year and I give it a high priority. While your experiences will be different from mine, I think the experience of participating in an in-person conference will pay dividends down the line as you build your network of other solo librarians or professionals working in your type of library. Although it is nice to be able to attend national or regional library association events, sometimes your local library association can provide in-person events, which

are often much less costly. You can even use local events to establish a professional learning community to explore topics of interest to the group and find other local solo librarians. If you don't have time for associations, then attend anything specifically designed for librarians. In librarianship in general, professional development is taken seriously, so explore your options and get connected with other professionals. Staying updated on new trends, technologies, or methodologies in your field can enhance your effectiveness as a librarian and may influence your long-term goals.

Another challenge of being a solo librarian is where to find continuing education opportunities to improve your library skills. Because being a solo librarian is not easy, you need to find time to educate yourself about changes in librarianship. To address these challenges, solo librarians, whether new to the field or seasoned professionals, have developed effective strategies and answers to questions about efficient library management methods. There are always online options, such as classes and workshops presented by universities with library schools. Also, some of the organizations you might belong to, such as the American Library Association or Atla, offer free access to online classes of interest to librarians as a member benefit. There are also webinars hosted by vendors like EBSCO, ProQuest, or other software-related educational opportunities. Open-source software often has a robust user community for you to connect with that can answer questions and give advice. I have found some of the presentations by vendors of software solutions have contributed to professional growth by providing access to free online courses. The message for solo librarians is clear: you don't have to navigate the challenges of being a solo librarian alone. A community of fellow solo practitioners exists, facing similar hurdles. The key is to explore and utilize the various professional development options available, creating a supportive network within the solo librarianship community. If there are additional recommendations for great professional development options for solo librarians, they are welcomed and encouraged.

Benefits of Solo Librarianship

Lastly, a benefit of being a solo librarian is the advantage of being able to create your own job. Despite the initial overwhelming feeling, making your own job creates an opportunity for creativity. By setting

goals, working backward, and focusing on the big picture, you are able to develop programs aligned with your vision for what the library could be. Before the case study at the end of this chapter, here are some benefits of working alone as a solo librarian. Being a solo librarian reduces conflict, eliminates politics, eliminates team meetings, and removes a potential source of stress: managing people. Solo librarians do not face working in a team, which can be challenging, since others have distinct work habits, opinions, and ideas for how to do things. Some teams even have an imbalance of work ethic, with some members doing more work than others, leading to conflict or misunderstanding. Working alone puts you in control of decision-making and workflows, which eliminates interpersonal conflicts and can increase your productivity and job satisfaction. With the time saved from eliminating or reducing meetings, you can focus on your regular job duties. If you are a solo librarian, there's no supervisor or manager nearby monitoring your work and you don't need to manage, monitor, or train anybody else, which can free up your time and reduce workplace challenges. Unless you want to work with volunteers and use student workers, you are a one-person workplace.

When you work alone as a solo librarian, you may find it easier to concentrate and work much faster. You can have more precision in the task you are working on since you won't have to incorporate anyone else's input into your work. You are also in charge of your own work, which allows you to plan your workday on your own and stick to a workflow that's convenient for you. As long as you can complete your tasks on time, you can choose whatever pace is convenient for you. The independence of your own schedule usually allows you to put your work tasks in the most efficient order and fit them around your non-work commitments, such as outside commitments and family obligations. You can also work longer hours if you need to complete something urgently or work less if you need a break. As an individual instead of a team, you can accomplish projects faster with less coordination, feedback, work distribution, and the general organization necessary when working with staff. This can result in projects taking less time to complete, costing less money, and consuming less of your seminary's resources.

From another perspective, being a solo librarian demonstrates that you are good at self-management. If you are not a solo librarian but are interested in becoming one at some point in your career, being able to work alone is a skill that many library directors look for in a job candidate. This means that whether you are working remotely or

in a regular office space, you can work on your own. Sometimes it helps to mention that you prefer to work independently to show those interviewing you that you need minimal assistance to complete tasks. As a library director, I am always interested in how independent someone I want to hire feels they are. Not everything in libraries is team-based, so having the experience of working alone is a real benefit in some situations. Being a solo librarian also allows you to take full credit for any and all projects that you are working on. Since there is no one else to work with, there is no one else to share the credit with but yourself, allowing your seminary's administration to recognize your skills. Who knows, you might even get more job satisfaction working alone and enjoy the challenges of being a solo librarian. You are also in charge of the work environment and create the kind of work atmosphere that works best for you to self-manage your workday.

Another way that being a solo librarian could work to your advantage is it boosts your reputation and proves that you can work independently. Your self-reliance at meeting your own needs and not being dependent on the help of others will be noticeable. In fact, it may unleash your creativity and your ability to think of new ideas and innovate without the influence of other people. Working in a team can be a fun and stimulating process, but trying to develop creative ideas by yourself can be more rewarding because you did it yourself.

Hopefully despite some of the challenges, the possibilities associated with being a solo librarian are appealing to you. If you already are a solo librarian, I hope you can work with some of the time management and goal setting discussed in this chapter to improve your efficiency and make your work more enjoyable. I think the most important part of whatever work environment you find yourself in is to make that place the best for your individual style. Talking to other solo librarians, finding ways to connect professionally and personally will improve your work experience and might increase your job satisfaction.

Case Study

After working in a larger library for several years, Joanie decided to try being a solo librarian at a new seminary in a nearby city. The new seminary has found office space in a business park in their city in which to launch their new school. The seminary was founded by faculty who

wanted to leave a larger seminary and start a place that was more appealing to part-time students, many of whom worked. Although she had never worked in a library that small before, Joanie was excited to be the only librarian and have a chance to make her own decisions. Most of the books for the new seminary were donated by faculty from their personal libraries so students would have a library. The rest was for Joanie to figure out for the new school. Her first task was to start figuring out how to set up a new library in a place not configured for a library as well as figuring out what the new students would need.

After meeting with the dean and looking at the new library space, Joanie knew she would need to set some goals, or benchmarks as they were called in her old library. She would need to be able to measure her progress even if it was a little bit at a time. From her previous library experience, Joanie also knew she would need to figure out what she could do on her own and what she would need help with. Something Joanie had learned in her previous library was the importance of networking with other librarians, so she set up a series of interviews with Rhonda, a solo librarian at a theology school several hours away. Rhonda had been a solo librarian for many years and was used to working alone. To help Joanie figure out her strengths and weaknesses as a solo librarian, Rhonda encouraged Joanie to look at the basic areas of the library—reference, instruction, circulation, cataloging, collection development and so on—then decide which she felt most comfortable doing on her own. As Rhonda put it, the cataloging backs up around her library because cataloging new books is her least favorite thing to do. Joanie agreed, since at her former library, she was most involved with reference and electronic resources. After additional conversations with Rhonda, Joanie felt more prepared to tackle her goals so she could give the dean her plan for starting the library.

 This library was a blank canvas. Joanie would have to design where the shelves would be arranged, where the service desk would go, and even what areas could be used for storage. To get started, Joanie decided on three-month,

six-month, and first-year goals. At this point, she decided to delay any longer-term goals until the library began to take shape and she could see how students were using the print resources. Within the first month, Joanie wanted to have the basic structure of shelving, desks, and study spaces ready, as well as the boxes of donated faculty books unpacked and loosely arranged on the shelves. Joanie would also set the hours the new library would be open based on her own schedule since she was a solo librarian. After that, she rounded out her three-month goals, deciding on a library management system to manage books and circulation, and exploring what databases and other online tools would be essential to student success at her seminary. For her six-month goals, a top priority was to do some kind of student survey to assess what needs students had and how the library could help. Although Joanie hadn't done too many surveys in her previous position, she was confident that there were resources out there to help her craft a survey that would at least get some of the information she needed.

With the first six months planned, Joanie decided on only one goal for the first year of the library. The goal was to have a working library where students who live in the community or at least within driving distance of the semi-nary could come and do research, check out books, and ask questions of the librarian. While there was still so much to do, at least some of the initial planning was done and she could take that to her dean for comments and suggestions. Joanie could also use her planning materials to develop a budget for the new library. She made a note to herself to call Rhonda again to discuss library budgets. To Joanie, this sounded like a lot of planning and not a lot of doing, but she had learned from her previous job that planning saved time later. Something that was left out of all the planning was how Joanie would get to know the students beyond the survey after six months. Joanie also didn't have any expe-rience working with students who didn't live on or close to campus, something that wasn't going to happen with the new seminary in a business park. There was even some thought by the new seminary's professors to hold classes

at local churches and on Zoom. Both class settings would definitely have an impact on how students used the library.

Think for a moment about how you would have responded if you were in Joanie's situation. Where would you have started and how would you manage your time? Would you have made the same planning decisions that she made? Do you have a network of other librarians that you can rely on to give you advice? What from this chapter do you think Joanie should do as she launches a new library as a solo librarian? Would you be willing to take this kind of library position?

Key Points from Chapter 6

1. Multitasking and Comprehensive Responsibilities: Solo librarians serve as the central coordinators of their libraries, handling all aspects of library management, including collection development, facilities management, technical services, reference, instruction, and policy setting. They fulfill diverse responsibilities while often working alone, akin to being the "air traffic controllers" of the library world.
2. Strategic Time Management and Goal Setting: Given the myriad tasks and priorities, solo librarians must possess strong time management skills and engage in strategic planning. Breaking down goals into manageable steps, setting clear priorities, and regularly assessing progress are essential processes for maintaining productivity and managing workload effectively.
3. Building Support Networks and Seeking Collaboration: While working alone, solo librarians need to build their own professional support systems and networks. This includes connecting with other librarians, attending professional development opportunities, and seeking collaboration with other departments within the institution to delegate tasks and alleviate workload pressures.

Managing a Small Theological Library

The Wider World

*L*ike the experience of solo librarians, which I discussed in Chapter 6, directors of small libraries need to get in the habit of getting out of the library. By this I mean talking with others in your seminary or school, belonging to library-related professional associations, and engaging in professional development. But limited staffing in libraries poses challenges to getting out into the wider world. Accessing professional development opportunities, particularly in terms of attending conferences and other programs outside the library building, usually requires two things: time and money. If you are in a small library, who will work in the library if you are not there? Also, one of the first budget lines to be cut is usually the professional development line. However, the significance of participating in professional development activities remains crucial for your ongoing professional development and keeping up with current library trends. Any type of professional development, whether conducted in person or online, will enable you, as the library director, and your staff to glean knowledge from your peers, gain insights from experts, and foster collaborations that contribute to enhancing everyone's libraries. By actively engaging

in professional development, you can continually expand your expertise and contribute to the advancement of your profession.

So how do you move into the wider world beyond the library's front door? In this chapter, I will start by expanding my discussion in Chapter 6 on time management. I know from being a small library director that there is never enough time to get everything done, so understanding time management is important. Next, I will discuss getting involved with consortiums, library networks, and other associations to keep yourself informed and find others to talk shop with. Particular attention will be paid to finding ways to do professional development on a limited budget, including how to keep a professional development line in the library budget.

Time Management Skills

As I covered in Chapter Six on the solo librarian, planning and time management skills are essential when you work in a small library. Among the most important skills in this area are organization, planning, prioritization, communication, delegation, stress management, problem-solving, and note-taking. While this seems like a huge laundry list of things you need to work on, take a breath and realize that you can work on as many or as few of these as you need to. You may have already mastered some of these. Plus, they all don't need to be done at the same time! Let's break these down into three groups.

First, organization plays a vital role in maintaining clarity about tasks and deadlines. This involves keeping an updated calendar, having easy access to documents you use on a regular basis, and taking meticulous notes. I prefer emails to conversations and sometimes follow up a conversation with an email in order to have a written record. This also gives a chance for the person or people you had the conversation with to clarify any points of confusion. Planning, particularly of your work week, is integral to time management, ensuring you are being efficient in scheduling activities, meetings, and tasks. Speaking of tasks, prioritization entails assessing tasks to determine their importance. Depending on how you work, you may opt to tackle quick tasks first, followed by more complex ones, or prioritize based on urgency or a combination of factors. An important lesson I learned a long time ago from a church leader was that the thing crying the loudest in their schedule was usually not the most urgent task they

needed to get done. How you prioritize your tasks is entirely up to you. Sometimes goal-setting is included with organization, planning, and prioritizing as a foundational element for effective time management. More on goal setting can be found in Chapter 6 if this is something you need to work on.

The second set of key skills are communication and delegation. Communication skills are crucial for conveying plans and goals clearly to supervisors, colleagues, and staff, as well as for seeking clarification or addressing challenges. These can be as casual as quick chats with your staff or others in your school, or as formal as written letters and meetings. Delegation, though typically associated with a management role such as library director, can also be beneficial for getting things done in a library. I delegate through job descriptions and individual interest by making sure what I delegate is actually in the person's job description. If I delegate and it isn't in their job description, then it is time to update the job description. Likewise, if someone has an interest in something, say getting supervising experience, then I look for ways to delegate something to them that gives them that experience. For example, I have always delegated training and supervising student workers to a staff member. They get the experience and I have one less task to do myself. For me, this is setting boundaries and learning to say "no" when necessary so I can manage my time effectively.

The last set of key skills are a bit harder to accomplish and you may work on them for your entire career. Stress management is a vital skill for maintaining your mental health and productivity. You may want to incorporate breaks into the day and reward yourself for accomplishments. I always plan a mid-morning break to get another cup of coffee from a different floor in my building. On the days I work from home, I take a walk in the afternoon to practice stress management. Along with stress management, problem-solving skills are invaluable for overcoming challenges and keeping projects on track. I think librarians are natural problem solvers, but it is a skill that can always be improved. Problem solving can also foster teamwork and cohesion among the staff of your library. Finally, develop the skill of note-taking and document management. This last skill may seem minor, but having a system for managing paper and emails is essential for staying organized and avoiding errors or delays because you have outdated information. Although all of these skills may sound like a lot of work just for time management, mastering them can greatly enhance your productivity, efficiency, and to some extent, overall well-being.

In addition to improving your time management skills, there are tools and technologies you can use to be more productive. There are planners and project management tools that help you organize tasks by day, week, and month. Planners come in both paper and digital versions. You can use your planner to make lists of all your tasks, deadlines, even your goals, and then choose how much time you want to allow for each. There are also project management tools to help you delegate tasks and track progress. A hack that works very well for me is to color code my Google calendar depending on whether something is a personal or professional task or meeting. When I enter them into the calendar, I also try to be realistic about how much time the task might take to accomplish. Then no matter where I am, I can see at a glance what I need to finish and if I need to reschedule anything. This is not foolproof, but it helps me keep a better work-life balance. A couple of other ideas that I haven't worked with too much yet are distraction blockers and time trackers. Occasionally I will set my work phone to "do not disturb" and also turn off my cell phone if I need to really get something done. Some messaging platforms also have "do not disturb" settings. There are also time tracking apps to measure how long it takes you to complete a certain project. Then you can estimate how long other tasks or projects might take. You can also use time trackers to better understand how you are using your time. All of these are merely suggestions in case you are looking for tips to improve your time management abilities.

Before I move on to professional development, I want to cover one more aspect of goal setting. As I have discussed before, there are many ways to set your goals and manage your time. A system I have used over the years and still use today is the SMART criteria: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. This ensures my goals are actionable and helpful for progress tracking. I review my SMART goals twice a year. During annual reviews, I review the previous year's goals to see if I accomplished them and decide what I might want to set as my SMART goals for the next year. Then at the mid-year check in, I look at my SMART goals for that year and see if I am making progress. I like using SMART goals because each goal forces me to focus on a specific thing and develop a way to measure my progress toward completing the goal. It also makes me keep my goals achievable and relevant as well as time-bound, usually either a six-month project or a year-long project. This keeps me from writing a goal that says I am going to weed the entire library in one year and instead keeps me realistic; I can only look at a certain call number

range given everything else I need to do. You can use SMART goals for yearly goals or even apply them to shorter projects like writing staff evaluations and ordering books. If you are looking for another tool to help you manage your time better, consider trying to write SMART goals to help you increase your productivity.

Professional Development

Let's talk for a bit about professional development. Professional development can be defined as "activities and efforts whether formal or informal that are employed by an individual to upgrade his/her knowledge, abilities and competencies in order to become a more effective professional in exercise of his/her professional duties throughout his/her working life" (Rafiq, Jabeen, & Arif, 2017, p. 25). For the American Library Association, professional development is so important to librarians that it is listed as one of the eight guiding statements in the "Code of Ethics of the American Library Association," found on ALA.org. The Professional Ethics code, last updated in 2021, says in statement eight, "We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession." For me, this makes clear that each of us as librarians is responsible for our own professional development. We are also responsible for supporting our colleagues and staff in their professional development. Although not directly written, statement eight implies that library directors are responsible for providing professional development opportunities for staff. In the span of my library career, I have gone from using the card catalog to using artificial intelligence in the library and I would not have been able to keep up with all of the changes without my supervisors supporting my professional development. Professional development helps librarians keep up with technology, understand their subject matter better, and increase productivity and efficiency. Here are a few examples of how I have done professional development both personally and for my staff.

You don't always need formal structure or classes to acquire new skills. Identify a skill relevant to your work or one that needs improvement and start practicing. For instance, mastering Excel or PowerPoint can be valuable, particularly for library directors. You can use Excel to help you manage your budget and PowerPoint to create presentations

and information graphics. Many software programs have free online tutorials and guides to teach yourself. As part of determining your yearly goals, you could dedicate time during your workday for learning, enabling you to quickly apply and refine these skills in real-time. You could also shadow a colleague. Learning from those around me has helped me learn to write better collection development policies, handle tricky administrative situations, and anything else you might want to work on. Your colleagues often possess valuable insights and knowledge that you can tap into. Identify someone with a skill set you want to acquire and ask if they are willing to share their expertise. Shadowing not only provides practical knowledge but also exposes you to various roles within your team, offering insights into additional skills you might want to develop. An example of shadowing for me is sharpening my cataloging skills by working with someone on my staff who knows more about cataloging than I do. I may not ever qualify for a cataloging position, but through watching and asking questions of someone who catalogs, I can read a cataloging record and understand more about how metadata is used.

An offshoot of this do-it-yourself method of professional development is to find a mentor who can guide you through what you want to learn. Sometimes these are more formal programs that offer mentors. Other times, you can find a mentor yourself. For example, where my library is located, there is a statewide organization for academic and research libraries. This organization offers a number of educational opportunities including a program for those who want to learn more about data management and storytelling. Through this year-long program, each participant works in a small group with a mentor to develop a project for their library using data and also learns how to better communicate the results of that project with library staff and school administrators. While this is only one example, look for this type of program in your local region, because they are often grant funded and either low cost or free.

Over the years, I have always looked for workshops or classes to improve my tech expertise. From HTML coding classes in the early days to, more recently, an online class in cataloging, I am always looking for ways to stretch my technical skills. One of my favorites was a one-day workshop on computers during which we took apart desktop and laptop computers so we knew what each part did on the inside. This made it much easier for me to upgrade memory cards or fix the cooling fans in computers used in some of the libraries I have worked in. There are also certified online courses to enhance your resume and

acquire valuable skills. Online courses are often more affordable than in-person options and are sometimes even offered for free. Regardless of the format—synchronous, hybrid, or asynchronous—these courses provide librarians with additional online education opportunities. Online learning allows flexibility, enabling you to plan study time around your day, making it an excellent option for balancing work and other commitments. I also received a grant to do a multi-year project in digital archives where we learned everything from copyright law to how to scan documents. There was even money in the grant to buy equipment for the library to start digitization projects. Lastly, I have pursued advanced degrees, like a Master of Arts in education and a Doctor of Ministry, to understand subjects better so I could be more helpful to students and faculty in the library.

For my staff, I have helped them write grant applications and paid for classes and workshops for them out of the library budget. If one of them comes to me and wants to do some kind of professional development, I always find a way to say yes and lend my support. Because of some of my contacts with other library directors, I have placed staff members in multi-month and multi-year programs for leadership development, skill building, and learning to work with data. If your institution offers free tuition to staff, encourage your library staff to get another degree, even if it is one class at a time. As I mentioned above, you may also have access to workshops and programs for your staff at a regional level that can help with professional development opportunities. This is not an exhaustive list, but more suggestions to help you think about ways to encourage professional development both for yourself and your staff.

Opportunities in Professional Associations

Another whole area for professional development is through professional associations. For those libraries in theological education, associations like Atla maintain professional development opportunities on a regular basis as well as have an annual conference. There are also many regional groups that meet throughout the year and offer programming of interest to local members. Regional groups are also a great way to network with other librarians. Although sometimes more skewed toward public librarians, your state library association often has an annual meeting and also offers free or low-cost professional

development opportunities usually hosted regionally. For those in theological education or a seminary library, Atla offers a variety of educational opportunities to its members. On another level, the American Library Association has many subgroups such as ACRL, which focuses on college and research libraries. Groups like ACRL publish a list of free professional development opportunities on their website. These include webinars, webcasts, a YouTube channel, and online discussion forums. Similarly, LITA, which focuses on library technology, maintains a clearinghouse for professional development on their website. An organization where my library is located in Illinois is called CARLI. Through this organization, my staff and I are able to participate in monthly webinars on a number of different topics. CARLI also publishes a list of events on their website. Wherever your library is located, look for those groups and organizations that offer free or low-cost professional development.

Beyond the opportunities organized by large organizations, make it a goal to check out what might be available in your local area. Who are the library directors in your area who direct similar libraries? Are there other librarians, such as public librarians, you should meet because your students use their library? What about connecting with any college librarians who may be near you? How you define "near you" will, of course, affect who you actually meet. But starting local gives you somewhere to begin. I have regular lunch appointments with other theological librarians in my area to chat about what is going on in our libraries. You could try taking a local librarian to lunch or coffee and see what you can learn. Join a listserv that interests you and read the posts from other librarians. Similarly, are there lectures or workshops that your school puts on that you can attend to increase your subject matter knowledge? Although these are not directly focused on librarianship, often they are great ways to meet people who support your school. You can also use opportunities within your own school to get to know faculty better. Sometimes library directors are considered faculty, and attending faculty meetings or serving on school committees can help you gain valuable knowledge you can use in managing the library.

Another way to do professional development is to attend a conference. Participating in conferences is an exciting way to network and gain insights from other librarians. Many professional conferences feature speakers and presenters who are also attending the conference, which gives you more opportunities to network with them as well as have follow up conversations. Depending on your specialty in

librarianship, there are conferences relevant to your area, but you can also attend conferences in related fields. For example, every year I try to attend the Atla Annual Conference because it is specifically geared to theological librarians. I also try to attend the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. AAR, as it is known, is a worldwide gathering of scholars and people interested in all aspects of theology and religion. I attend both of these because Atla helps me be a better librarian, and AAR helps me keep up with the latest research, trends, and publications in the areas my faculty are interested in. Before you go, make sure you research presenters, review the agenda, and make the most of the opportunity to learn and connect. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many conferences are also offering an online option in case your library budget doesn't cover the travel and other related conference attendance expenses.

Professional Development on a Budget

All of the above suggestions are doable, but how do you pay for them? Beyond looking for the free workshops, which are usually online, where can you find the money for more targeted training opportunities? Over the span of my library career, every time I find a program or class I want to attend, I immediately look to see if there are scholarships or grants available and information about what it takes to qualify for one. Similarly, are there grants available from other institutions that you can apply to the program of your choice? Sometimes organizations will offer cheaper rates if you register for the conference early and have a hotel available at a preferred (often cheaper) rate. Other organizations offer their own scholarships and grants to help you attend. Taking this strategy of going for scholarships and grants, I have been able to participate in ACRL's Immersion Program for instruction librarians as well as other high-level programs sponsored by national organizations. As I noted above, I also got a two-year grant to participate in a local history archives program where I learned all about digitizing library collections, including the copyright issues involved. Writing grant applications can be daunting and it doesn't always work out. But there are definitely self-paced workshops that will help you become a better grant writer too. Always look for the opportunity to use someone else's money to pay for what you want to do. A last strategy I have used if I cannot find scholarships or grants is to see if I can volunteer

to help with the program I want to attend. Sometimes helping with the program has gotten me cost reductions or saved me the registration fees. Yes, it means more work for me, but at least I get to attend the program. Sometimes serving on the organization's board of directors comes with travel funds to offset the cost of conference or program attendance. This further stretches the library budget and helps you develop your leadership skills at the same time.

Finally, one of the first lines to be cut in the library budget is professional development because it seems frivolous to send the library director and the library staff to a professional meeting when the collection development budget is shrinking. A way to address this is to make sure you put professional development and what you expect to gain from doing professional development into your library strategic plan or library goals. Also write professional development into your yearly job goals. Giving a prominent position to addressing your own needs and taking care of yourself just might be the nudge that keeps professional development in your yearly budget. Personally, I put the cost of one conference per librarian into my annually requested budget. That mostly covers travel, lodging, and meals for each of my librarians. Whenever possible, I try to find ways to get discounts on registrations as well. Then it is up to my library staff to tell me which conference they want to attend and what they hope to get out of attending.

Another topic related to library budgets to mention in this chapter about getting out the front door of your library is the ever-growing cost of belonging to professional organizations. Sometimes, these fees are covered by your seminary or institution. But sadly, many schools don't cover membership fees. Since they can be quite costly depending on where you live, cost might be a barrier to your participation (see ALA's personal membership options on ALA.org). In 2023, Atla started a membership bundling program that offered each institutional member one free individual membership and any number of additional individual memberships at a slightly reduced cost. To make sure every member of my staff is a member of Atla, I bundle all of their membership fees into the institutional membership fee. This allows me to have my institution cover the cost of membership instead of the librarians. Both the short-term and long-term benefits to the librarians and the seminary are worth taking this out of the library budget.

Getting out of the front door of the library into the wider world is never easy or cheap. But through developing your time management skills and building your personal networks, opportunities to take workshops and programs will happen. Likewise, networking with

librarians beyond your school and with faculty within your school will give you peers that you can turn to with questions when you need to. There is a wider world out there beyond the library waiting for you to join it.

Case Study

As sometimes happens in small libraries, Mike's library has been asked to start providing a research class that new students will take in their first semester at the theological school. Historically, the library has offered hands-on workshops, classes, and individual appointments. The school's assessment committee thinks a research class for all new students will improve student retention and raise student success. However, Mike's staff is already feeling overworked and Mike himself doesn't think he has the skills to teach an actual semester-long class. While time management is crucial in every aspect of professional life, especially in the rapidly changing world of libraries, how are Mike and his staff going to find the time in their schedules to create the curriculum for a new class and then teach it?

To get started, Mike called a staff meeting to assess skills and figure out what they still needed to learn. The reference librarian had a number of handouts from workshops and classes the library had already taught. The electronic resources person spoke up that there were videos about how to use the library already on the library website. But Mike realized each of his staff members was already covering at least two positions in the library, and no one had ever taught a full semester class before. The library staff only had a team of four librarians, and they faced constant deadlines and student demands. But before Mike could move forward with planning this new class, he had to deal with some challenges. Inefficient allocation of some work was a significant issue, with librarians struggling to prioritize tasks, leading to delays in getting ready for each semester and student confusion. Additionally, there was a lack of coordination among library staff members, resulting in duplication of efforts and wasted time. Moreover,

continuous work pressure and unrealistic deadlines from the dean was leading to burnout among the librarians, affecting their productivity and morale.

To address these challenges, Mike implemented some new time management strategies and invited each librarian to meet with him to review their job descriptions and responsibilities. To improve communication between the librarians, Mike created a common calendar in Google for every librarian to keep their calendars. While not interested in personal appointments, the new library calendar tracked who was in the library and who would be working remotely. The calendar also tracked vacations, professional development days, and even appointments with students and researchers. Then Mike added the school's master calendar to the Google calendar so the library staff could see what was happening around the school. The library staff felt like it was a good start to helping each of them manage their time better.

In the meetings with individual librarians to review their job descriptions, everyone realized they needed to have a common system for prioritizing library work. First, they implemented a priority system for categorizing tasks based on urgency and importance. This helped each librarian focus on high-priority tasks and work later on or eliminate less critical ones. Second, Mike encouraged everyone to allocate specific time blocks for different tasks throughout the day, minimizing distractions and maintaining focus on essential activities. Third, the librarians asked if they could have a brief, weekly meeting to track progress and make sure priorities and tasks were getting a timely completion. Lastly, everyone worked on improving communication by having common drives on Google to facilitate better coordination among the librarians, help reduce misunderstandings, and to streamline workflows.

The implementation of these time management strategies yielded gradual improvements. Each librarian reported increased productivity and efficiency as they could better prioritize tasks and allocate time effectively. Additionally,

the library met deadlines in the school calendar more consistently, leading to improved student satisfaction. Moreover, the librarians experienced reduced stress levels and burnout, as well as improved morale. Finally, clear communication and efficient task allocation resulted in streamlined workflows, reducing time wasting and redundancy.

But even with these improvements in time management, Mike still faced the issue of the new class. None of his library staff had the expertise or experience to teach that class. After conversations with the librarians, Mike decided the class would be team-taught with himself as the coordinator and main instructor, and each librarian contributing something to the overall class. The reference librarian agreed to teach at least two sessions on searching the library catalog while the electronic resources librarian agreed to teach two sessions on how to use the library website. Since the class came with a course setup in the online learning system, the systems librarian agreed to take on organizing class information online and making sure everything was kept up to date in the learning system. Because teaching this new class was going to require upskilling and reskilling each of the librarians, Mike tasked everyone to scour information sources to find free or low-cost classes on the online learning system and course design, and Mike met with the school's instructional designer for tips on creating the class. The multifaceted approach to professional development helped everyone find classes and workshops to meet their needs. Beyond the regular workshops and training sessions, Mike also found a six-month training program through an association the library belonged to that helped librarians learn to teach. He would go through the program first and then expected the rest of the library staff to take the training program as well. This would bolster technical expertise, such as classroom design and lesson planning. Since these sessions were led by librarians who were experts, everyone felt the training program catered to the specific needs the library was facing. Moreover, training programs were a strong way to hone essential leadership competencies like

communication, decision-making, and team management. Finally, because he still felt unprepared to teach a semester-long class, Mike asked a seasoned faculty member to serve as a mentor for him offering guidance and support. Mike also asked the school's administration to provide additional funds for the library staff to attend a conference where there would be several presentations on teaching and learning from the library's perspective. While it is still too early for Mike to fully evaluate how the changes and additional professional development have helped his staff, the new class launched in the fall semester. Everyone agrees there is still room for improvement, but they are pleased with the results so far.

If you were in a similar situation, how would you manage it? What questions does this case study raise for you to consider? If your library is already teaching this kind of class, what are the similarities and differences between Mike's approach and the approach of your library?

Key Points from Chapter 7

1. Time Management and Organization: Effective time management skills are essential for small library directors. This includes organization, planning, prioritization, communication, delegation, stress management, problem-solving, and note-taking.
2. Professional Development: Continuous learning and development are crucial for staying updated on library trends and improving skills. This can be achieved through various methods such as self-practice, shadowing colleagues, finding mentors, attending workshops and classes, pursuing advanced degrees, and participating in conferences.
3. Funding Professional Development: Securing funding for professional development can be challenging but is achievable through scholarships, grants, early registration discounts, volunteering, and integrating professional development into library budgets and strategic plans.

4. Networking and Collaboration: Building relationships with colleagues, both within and outside the institution, is essential for professional growth. This includes joining professional associations, attending conferences, participating in regional groups, and connecting with local librarians and faculty members.

5. Membership Fees: Membership fees for professional organizations can be costly, but institutions may cover these expenses. Utilizing membership bundling programs and integrating fees into institutional budgets can help alleviate costs for individual librarians.

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Managing Up

So far, this book has focused on you as the library director, the person in charge. But you report to someone as well in your seminary or graduate school, and that person is your boss. Which administrator oversees the library can be different at every institution. At one place I worked, the library director reported directly to the president of the school, while in another one the library director reported to the academic dean. Sometimes, the chief financial officer is responsible for the library. Whoever that person is, you need to know the person you report to. One of your responsibilities as the library director is to represent the library to your school and to your school's administration. Dealing with deans and other administrators can cause headaches for the small library director but can also be a source of real support. How you manage the relationship between yourself and who you report to is called *managing up*. This chapter will focus on the concept of managing up and give you some tips for how to do this effectively. At the end of the chapter, I will also give you some ideas about other important relationships to cultivate around your school.

What is Managing Up?

Let's start with what managing up is not. Although there are plenty of sources to tell you what managing up is, one of the best resources I have found to understand both sides of managing up comes from Luke Weisner's article "Managing Up: What is It and Why Do It?" on the University of California-Merced's Human Resources Department blog, where he is the conflict resolution coach. In the blog post, Wiesner treats this topic evenly and I encourage you to read it. According to Wiesner, managing up is not "supervising or overseeing your boss" and it is certainly not "going above your boss's head to have your voice heard." Your job is also not about "evaluating or judging your boss's management or leadership style." After all, as Wiesner points out, you are not going to be able to change your boss, and you will need to learn how to work with your boss's style. It also won't work to try changing your boss "into a better manager" or "challenging decisions or actions your boss takes." I can tell you from firsthand experience of having an employee who tried to manage me, having someone who went over my head to have their voice heard and judged my management style constantly made me very angry. Luke Wiesner's piece is very clear: your boss is your boss.

In a seminary library, often your boss is the academic dean, particularly in small institutions. You may also report occasionally to the president of your school depending on how your school is structured. So, what is managing up? Let's hear again from Luke Wiesner. He suggests for an employee, it is managing a "relationship with your boss" that develops into a "productive working rapport," which takes time to develop. Further, he thinks managing up is "learning your boss's management, leadership and communication styles and preferences." For example, I take a very hands-off approach to management and prefer to let my staff do their jobs and come to me with questions or issues they want me to comment on. In your setting, does your boss like everything in writing via email or is your boss the more casual conversation type? I like casual conversations to talk through issues, but I follow up with an email so there is a written record. You can "increas[e] your awareness of your own work and communication style and preferences" while you are learning your boss's preferences. How do you like to communicate? Finally, Wiesner advises that managing up is about "adapting and aligning the work styles of your boss and yourself to have a productive working relationship" leading toward

"mutual growth" and "work productivity." You need to understand what managing up isn't as well as what it is to unlock the power in learning to manage your boss. I highly recommend you read this article because there are questions to consider, plus more questions for you to reflect on about your relationship with your boss.

Why should you care about managing up? Because not all deans or other supervisors are created equal. Some are more task oriented while others are more relationship and team oriented. Some may like to micromanage while others take a more hands-off approach and encourage autonomy. When done well, managing up makes your supervisor's job and your own job easier. You know the best way to communicate with your boss. You have your library goals or strategic plan well defined so you can meet those goals. Finally, you may notice things about your dean or supervisor, like when is the best time to reach them or when to schedule meetings with them. These may be small things you need to attend to, but demonstrating you know your boss helps you have a better relationship with that person. Hopefully, it will also lead to better job satisfaction in your role as a director of a small library or a solo librarian. Likewise, working on managing your boss will help you with the people you supervise when they try to manage you.

Skillful library directors can excel in cultivating strong relationships with all their political stakeholders, and you want to be a skillful director. Although you could argue the students and faculty are the biggest stakeholders, I think particularly in a small library, whomever you report to is your biggest stakeholder. That person is responsible to the seminary president and at some level also the board of trustees for what happens in your library. If you can demonstrate or develop the ability to maintain this person's support even amid significant institutional challenges, the library will be able to better weather a stormy budget crisis or the ups and downs of student enrollment levels over the years. You will be particularly well positioned if, due to declining enrollment, your boss needs to make big decisions regarding the library. Your boss is going to be faced with turmoil and crisis, so making the effort to prioritize nurturing connections with that person ensures that the demands of their administrative duties do not detract from your role as the library director. You will also be well served to maintain a steadfast commitment to fostering wider political alliances throughout your seminary or school, which will serve as a cornerstone of effective leadership for the library during times of hardship.

Many library directors perceive managing up as a burdensome task, often shrouded in secrecy from their direct supervisors. They typically view it as necessary only when their supervisor lacks essential organizational, communication, or supervisory skills. Alternatively, some compare managing up to "sucking up," suggesting that it involves ingratiating yourself to higher-ups. This perspective often arises from the belief that it is solely the supervisor's responsibility to ensure effective communication and support for their subordinates. However, you need to adopt a more proactive stance on managing up, recognizing it as a shared responsibility. You need to understand that fostering a productive relationship with your supervisor involves not only effective communication but also active engagement in decision-making processes. Unfortunately, sometimes in these situations you may find yourself shouldering the burden of leadership, despite lacking the corresponding authority or compensation. This imbalance can lead to feelings of resentment and apprehension about job security if your efforts to influence your supervisor's decisions are perceived as manipulation. In contrast, supervisors who resist change and shy away from decision-making create a negative atmosphere that drains resources and stifles progress. If that is the case you may feel compelled to take on greater responsibility, even though it exceeds your designated role. This dynamic can breed dissatisfaction and uncertainty for you, as the library director, as you grapple with the dual challenges of managing your supervisors' expectations and maintaining your own professional integrity.

Factors of Organizational Dynamics

As you manage up, navigating the complexities of organizational dynamics within your school or academia in general will bring to light various nuances and intricacies that influence the confidence you might have in your school's administration. This is particularly true for the evolving roles of academic leaders, especially deans. Before we move on, let's delve deeper into the four factors that underpin this dynamic landscape.

The first factor is visibility and accountability. Within your school, the administrators such as the dean and president stand as symbols of authority and fiscal responsibility. Often along with the chief financial officer, the dean and president have the most contact with your

seminary's board of directors and they are seen as having responsibility for how your school operates. Their prominence in the hierarchy of your school inevitably positions these administrators as the face of leadership, especially during hard times when your school might be facing many challenges. When this happens, the spotlight as usual turns to these visible figures, holding them accountable for the direction your institution is going in. Yet, these same administrators wield access to invaluable resources for the library and data you can use to make the library better, such as enrollment figures and planned curriculum changes. Because they are visible and accountable, this often enhances the perception they are doing a good job and might bolster confidence in their leadership.

The second factor can be challenging: sometimes administrators are more conservative. What I mean by this is that the decision-making attitude of seminary and theological school administrators often veers towards taking a safer approach over boldness and risk-taking. This is a natural response to the weight of their responsibility for the whole school and the obligation to navigate complex institutional landscapes. In the dynamic landscape of leading a seminary, they have the formidable task of being accountable for pivotal decisions. This fosters a careful and pragmatic approach among administrators, usually aligning their decision-making strategies with the task of lessening risk. Since the early 2000s, there have been many campus and institutional upheavals. Campuses have been sold and some seminaries have gone completely online, while others downsized staff and faculty. So this conservative approach resonates deeply with prevailing views, sometimes creating renewed trust in administrative insight and determination. You may not understand or agree with why your dean made a certain decision, but they may be looking out for what they think is the good of the whole seminary.

A third factor in the dynamic landscape of theological education leadership is how students engage with administrators. For some schools, this relationship forms a cornerstone of institutional governance. Despite efforts to clarify the division of decision-making authority, students frequently see top administrators as the primary creators of institutional policies and practices. Students think everything comes from the president's or dean's office. Consequently, administrators find themselves at the forefront of addressing student demands, shaping appropriate responses, and fostering a conducive environment for academic and personal growth. Because seminaries and schools of theology are usually smaller, this direct engagement underscores

the pivotal role senior administrators have in forming the student experience and institutional culture.

Finally, the fourth factor is how administrative responsibilities are always evolving. The ever-evolving landscape of higher education requires innovative approaches to administrative governance. A central concept to this evolution is the recalibration of administrative responsibilities. The recalibration needs to strike a delicate balance between centralized oversight for the whole school and decentralized autonomy for faculty and some program units like the library. Centralizing functions such as institutional goal setting through institutional planning committees and performance assessment is monitored through a human resources person. At the same time, decentralizing program management empowers stakeholders, like the library director, at the grassroots level, ensuring responsiveness to diverse needs and goals. Just as the field of librarianship is always evolving, so are the responsibilities of the administrators you report to, as the library director.

When taken together, these four factors outline how complicated and dynamic the situation you, as the library director, face while managing up. Amidst the labyrinthine demands on you for administrative stewardship, the major role of the academic leaders you report to will sometimes transcend mere managerial competence. Deans and other top administrators often stop teaching classes and advising students in order to become educational leaders, but this doesn't always make them the best suited for that role. Plus, they won't always have the time unless they choose to carve out space to engage in scholarly inquiry and research like they did before they became a dean. In managing up, you are going to have to realize that the mundane rigors of administrative routine have replaced the scholarly dialogue your dean used to have with their colleagues. With their heightened visibility and greater responsibility, the dean you report to has a lot of other things going on in their daily work life than just the library.

Tips for Managing Up

There are also some positive perspectives on managing up. While you still might be thinking that managing up sounds sneaky or presumptuous, instead, think of managing up as your way to take responsibility for improving the relationship with your boss. You may already

have strategies in place to work on the relationships with your staff or colleagues, so why not have a better relationship with your boss? You may find yourself doing your best work when you have built good relationships with people at all levels in your school. Besides, managing up doesn't need to be obvious. Here are three considerations to think about when you are managing up by being an involved and caring contributor in the relationship you have with your supervisor.

The first consideration is: What is the best way to communicate with your boss? If your boss is the dean, what is their preferred communication style? I have worked for some who like in-person meetings even if they are casual, like over lunch, while others are fine communicating via email. How often do they want communication with you and to what level of detail? My first dean wanted a weekly meeting, while at another seminary, the dean wanted only monthly written reports. There are so many different approaches to communicating with your supervisor that the best place to start is with your own style of communication. For me, that is emails or casual conversations followed up with more casual conversations and emails to document what was said. Whenever I get a new supervisor, I start by sending them emails unless they tell me their preferred style of communication. If my supervisor prefers phone calls, then I adapt from sending emails to picking up the phone. The most important takeaway from learning to communicate with your boss is to communicate what you need.

Figuring out the best way to communicate also works with your library staff and others you need to work with around your school. For many people, open communication may be appreciated. My staff has figured out that the best way to reach me is via email, or if I am in the office they can stop by for a chat since I usually work with my office door open. We also follow up our conversations with emails because I am tracking multiple projects at once and I don't want to lose any details. I know my communication style doesn't work best for all of my staff, particularly for the person who wants regular staff meetings. But since we are a small staff, I like to keep communication simple. Another thing to think about when communicating with both your boss and your staff is how you want to communicate. My best working relationships are not just about communicating tasks but also about communicating work styles and communication preferences. Before you get overwhelmed by all of this communicating, understand that once you figure out how to communicate both with your boss and your staff, there is the potential to make your work life easier because

communication is so central to getting work done in the academic environment.

A second consideration when managing up is to figure out what your boss wants to know. This takes communication one step further from how they want to communicate with you to how much they want to know from you and in what format. Does your dean need data to decide, or do they prefer yes or no answers? How far in advance do you need to contact them for an appointment, or can you drop in when you need something? Perhaps the opposite is true as well, that your boss will pop into your office for a quick answer whenever they need to. I had one dean who liked to walk around campus stopping by at the offices of those they supervised to check in and ask questions. At first you may need to take notes as you work with your boss on their preferences and understand over time how much information they need, but over time, this will improve communication and help you manage the library more effectively.

The third consideration is for you to understand that your supervisor's goals are your goals. You are going to need to align your priorities and the priorities of the library with whatever the priorities of your dean are. Maybe your dean is having a difficult time with the board of trustees. Do you know what your dean values in a seminary library? What is the reputation of the library in your wider setting? There are many more questions to ask here, but essentially, whatever the goals of your dean are will become the goals of the library, even if they do not align with your goals for the library. You are going to need to balance your relationship with the dean or whoever you report to by holding both your goals for the library and their goals at the same time. In order to do that, I sometimes need to ask my dean directly for details that can help me help them. I also ask them what they are trying to do so I can get the library to help them. In the end you need to understand that there is an art to managing up; it is not done through some magical formula.

Just like you in managing the library, your supervisor has multiple responsibilities, including budgetary oversight, academic governance, engaging with committees, and policy support. Managing up is about strategic leadership and having a strategic approach to foster a positive and productive working relationship with your supervisors and the other administrators in your institution. It involves understanding more than just their preferences, goals, and communication styles to effectively support their needs while advancing the library's goals and your own career objectives. This is about using your organizational

context for decision-making and may be a skill you need to develop. Also, anticipating your dean's needs and proactively addressing them demonstrates your initiative and reliability. This may involve identifying potential problems before they arise, offering solutions, or taking on additional responsibilities if necessary. Finally, be adaptable and flexible in your approach to managing up. Recognize that your boss's preferences and priorities may change over time, and be willing to adjust your strategies accordingly. By staying proactive, communicative, and attuned to their needs, you can cultivate a good working relationship that enhances both your professional growth and the success of your school. Managing your supervisor effectively is a crucial skill in navigating your workplace.

Relationships Across Campus

As I have mentioned previously, beyond your boss or dean or supervisor, who else in your school or institution do you need to have a relationship with? This is not exactly like managing up, but these relationships are still very important to your role as the library director. The answer to who you need a relationship with is directly related to where you are located. Here are a few suggestions of the relationships I have managed over the years and which I still manage in my current institution. One of the first and most important relationships has always been with the head of maintenance and their staff. After all, when something goes wrong with your library, maintenance is usually the first place you call. Chatting with the head of maintenance can help you better understand how that department is staffed and what they do in your building and on your campus. You can also ask them what an emergency means to them. For instance, a water leak might be more important than a full trash can. Your communication style with maintenance will also help you reach them quickly in case of an emergency. Some heads of maintenance maintain a special number for you to call while others prefer emails or texts directly to their cell phones. Getting to know the maintenance department and how they like to communicate has long been one of the first relationships I develop when I start at a new campus.

You may also want to build relationships with the registrar, various program administrators, and your boss's assistant. These people can be sources for great knowledge and timely gossip because each

of them regularly comes in contact with students, faculty, alumni, and other people who are involved in your school. They can keep you updated on schedule changes, upcoming events, personnel changes, and anything else happening at your seminary. The registrar may even be connected with other seminaries in your area if your school participates in cross-registration programs. Throughout my library career I have made a point of walking around campus and dropping into offices just to chat for a few minutes so people can actually see me without having to come to the library. If your school has a common lunch table or break time when staff gather, be sure to attend these gatherings if you feel comfortable. You will find yourself making new friends and gathering good information about how your school operates.

One of my most important relationships at the various libraries I have worked in has been with people in the business office. Those are the people responsible for paying the library's bills and it is important for you to know more than how to submit invoices for payment. You need to know their names and their roles in the business office so if you have questions related to the library budget, you know who to ask. If you are a new library director, the people who staff your business office can teach you a great deal about accounting practices and are usually excited that you have taken an interest in their work. Cultivating these relationships is important even if it means setting aside time in your schedule to be away from other duties. Learning the language of finance and accounting will help you communicate with them more effectively and help you manage the library's budget and be an advocate for library needs.

The final group you may want to cultivate relationships with are students and, by extension, alumni. Students often aren't on campus long enough for you to develop strong relationships with them. Yet, they can be great advocates for the library and financial supporters as alumni. Depending on how your library is structured and the nature of your student body, you can do everything from hosting movie nights in the library to keeping a jar of candy on the service desk for students to pick up as a snack on their way to class. Think about hosting student-focused seasonal celebrations like a Halloween or graduation party. Make the effort to show up at student-led events and services. Celebrate your students by attending graduation so you can keep up with them as alumni. Because students are your primary users, anything you can do to foster a relationship with them is important.

Like it or not, making your boss's job easier is your responsibility. Using open communication, knowing, and sharing the information

they want to know, and trying to respect their role in the school are good ways to get started. By doing this, you can turn the mutual respect into greater support for library activities. I think managing up is a powerful tool for library directors and ripples far further than just up, it also ripples toward those you supervise. Managing up will make you a better manager because you will be more aware of the issues your dean experiences. As a leader at your seminary, you will be better equipped to see different perspectives as assets, not liabilities. Together, everyone looks out for the goals of the organization, not just your personal needs. Managing up can improve your working relationship with your dean and, in turn, have a constructive effect on your work and on your library.

Case Study

Bart has been managing the small library at his school of theology for almost four years. With a staff of two other librarians, he has learned a great deal about how to communicate with his staff. Bart has also developed a great relationship with other departments and managers throughout the school. While he loves his work and finds the students to be easy to work with, Bart has always struggled with his supervisor. During his time at this particular school, there have been three different deans in a four-year period. This much turnover in the dean's office is very different for Bart since in the last seminary he worked in, the same person was the dean for more than ten years. Bart has realized how important it can be to have stability and a situation where the same person remains in a key administrative position for several years.

When he was hired, Bart really liked the dean and worked well with them. The dean took a hands-off approach to the library, checking in with Bart about every three months and in turn, Bart felt he could email the dean with any concerns or issues. Communication seemed good and that situation gave Bart extra time in his schedule to develop good working relationships with other departments around campus. But suddenly, after about a year at the school, Bart's

dean became very ill and resigned, leaving a second dean for him to report to. The second dean, however, was only an interim while the school of theology conducted a wider search for a new dean.

Working with the second dean was a struggle for Bart. There were budget issues at the school and the dean seemed distracted during every meeting scheduled with Bart and the library staff. Bart even began to believe the dean wasn't reading the written reports he labored over to inform the dean about what was going on in the library. In talking to others around his school, Bart sensed a high level of frustration on everyone's part at the dean. After a few months, the school hired a new dean who was the third dean Bart would work for at the school. While he was hopeful in the beginning, after two years with the third dean, Bart is discouraged.

When the latest dean arrived, Bart tried figuring out how to best communicate with his new dean. First, he tried emailing, then when there wasn't a response, he tried dropping by the dean's office. When that wasn't successful, Bart tried making an appointment to see the dean and offered to give his new dean a tour of the library. The dean never responded and neither did the dean's assistant. Bart then decided to try a different strategy to discover how to best communicate with the dean. He asked some of his colleagues at lunch how they communicated with the dean. Some responded that their experience with the latest dean mirrored Bart's, but one person had success inviting the dean out for coffee away from campus. Getting the dean off campus meant fewer distractions and more focused conversations about important issues.

After several attempts, Bart got a coffee date with his latest dean to talk about the library. He came to the meeting prepared to work on communication strategies as well as to figure out what the dean's goals were and how the dean wanted him to best communicate the library's needs. Before the coffee time with the dean, Bart sent the latest copy of the library's strategic goals to the dean and told them he

wanted to discuss the library goals so he could better align the library with the dean's goals. Bart was hopeful that this was his chance to really understand his dean and how best to manage up.

After Bart had coffee with his dean, he discovered that to communicate with the dean, he would need to have a monthly coffee meeting away from campus, so they were not distracted. The dean also wanted Bart to give a regular report at the faculty assembly so everyone would know what was going on in the library. Then when Bart tried to discuss the library's strategic plan, the dean said that discussion would have to wait until the overall strategic plan for the school was finished but didn't know when that would happen. Bart walked back to campus after the coffee date with mixed feelings. He didn't get as much as he wanted from his meeting with the dean and didn't think giving the faculty assembly a monthly report would be that effective as a communication tool since the faculty had a reputation for not reading the reports before the assembly.

Still concerned about communication with the dean and managing up, Bart returned to the library discouraged. How could he align the library with the dean's goals if the dean didn't have goals? Did other departments at his school have the same issue with the latest dean? Could he invite the dean for meetings in the library that would reduce the number of distractions and help Bart improve his relationship with the dean? Bart knew he still had a long way to go in managing up with his dean, but maybe there was a way to make this work.

If you were in Bart's situation, what would you do? How would you handle the turnover in the dean's office and having three different bosses in four years? What would you do to work on figuring out the best communication style with the dean? How would you involve your library staff in this issue you are having with the dean? Are there issues that Bart has missed in his managing up process that you think he needs to work on? What would be your next step?

Key Points from Chapter 8

1. Understanding Managing Up: Managing up involves developing a productive working relationship with your supervisor and understanding their management style, communication preferences, and goals. It's about adapting and aligning your work style with theirs to foster mutual growth and productivity.
2. Why Manage Up?: Effectively managing up can make your supervisor's job easier, enhance communication, and ensure alignment between your library's goals and the broader goals of the institution. It can also lead to better job satisfaction and support during challenging times.
3. Building Relationships Beyond Your Boss: Cultivating relationships with other stakeholders in your institution, such as maintenance staff, program administrators, business office personnel, and students, is crucial for a library director. These connections can provide valuable insights, support, and resources for the library's success.

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The Accreditors are Coming!

*I*n higher education, the accreditation status of the school is a big deal and involves these main attributes. First, accreditation is about quality assurance. Accreditation ensures that educational institutions meet certain standards of quality and effectiveness in their programs, faculty, facilities, and resources. It provides a mechanism for external evaluation and validation of the institution's educational offerings. Second, accreditation enhances your seminary's recognition and credibility. It signifies that your institution has undergone a rigorous evaluation process and meets established standards of excellence. Third, accreditation helps with the transferability of credits. Accreditation facilitates the transfer of credits between institutions so that students can be confident that their coursework completed at an accredited institution will be recognized by other accredited institutions, making it easier to transfer credits and continue their education elsewhere. Fourth, accredited institutions may be eligible for federal and state funding, as well as grants and scholarships. Accreditation is often a requirement for institutions to receive government funding or participate in financial aid programs. This may not apply to all countries, but it is true in the United States. Fifth, many professional

licensure and certification programs require applicants to have completed their education at an accredited institution. Accreditation ensures that graduates meet the necessary educational requirements for licensure or certification in their field. In theological education, some denominations or faith communities may require you to attend a certain school if you want to work in that denomination. Although not the same as, say, the professional licensure requirements for a doctor or a lawyer, it still serves as a means to ensure the necessary educational requirements are met. Finally, accreditation encourages institutions to engage in continuous self-assessment and improvement. Accredited institutions are required to undergo periodic reviews and assessments to maintain their accreditation status, driving ongoing improvement and innovation in teaching, learning, and institutional practices.

What does accreditation look like in theological education? According to the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), a main accreditor of theological schools and seminaries in the United States, accreditation is about quality assurance and ongoing improvement. As an accrediting body, ATS is particularly interested in student learning and student formation for ministry. Accreditation is usually a voluntary process and not all countries have accreditation agencies. I will have more on that below. But for those who do, accreditation includes schools mutually involved in the accreditation process, assuring that a peer institution's educational quality is based on a set of standards. This process also ensures ongoing improvement on the part of each school to meet the standards. Within theological education, most schools are accredited by ATS, but some are also accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, or other national or regional agencies depending on location. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the other agencies aren't specifically for seminaries or schools of religion or theology, as opposed to ATS, which only does schools of theology, seminaries, and theological programs within larger universities. Who a school turns to for accreditation depends entirely on how the school wants to be accredited and if accreditation is important in their context.

What is Accreditation?

Accreditation in higher education is, at its core, a quality assurance process. It involves an external review of what are called postsecondary

Managing a Small Theological Library

educational institutions or programs to make sure they meet recognized standards. Postsecondary educational institutions are colleges, universities, graduate schools, seminaries, schools of theology, and so on, plus any programs that these types of schools may be operating. Accreditation is approved by accrediting agencies such as the Association of Theological Schools or the Higher Learning Commission, both mentioned above, after a thorough evaluation of an institution's services, operations, and educational programs. In the United States, for example, there are two main types of accreditations: regional and national. Regional accreditation is the more common type, which is typically granted to nonprofit, degree-granting institutions by their regional accrediting agency. All accrediting agencies granted accreditation status are recognized by the United States Department of Education. On the other hand, national accreditation is often given to for-profit schools such as the University of Phoenix or DeVry University, plus vocational institutions, which include seminaries and schools of theology, or specific programs within universities such as a graduate studies program in religion.

Accreditation is a key process that assesses a postsecondary educational institution or program to make sure they meet specific standards. The specific standards cover such areas as libraries, student services, financial resources, and various degree programs. Accreditation is only given to institutions or programs that meet the criteria. Where accreditation gets even more interesting is that not all countries do accreditation the same way. Many countries have government organizations overseeing educational accreditation, such as ministries of education, but the United States has independent private agencies handling this quality assurance process. If your seminary is in Canada, there is a unique stance since the Canadian government doesn't do accreditation and there aren't private accreditation agencies like there are in the United States. This leads some Canadian institutions, such as seminaries or schools of theology, to seek accreditation from U.S. agencies. Often, Canadian seminaries turn to ATS for this service. Similarly, Singapore and Macau lack their own accreditation bodies, so institutions from these countries also look to foreign accreditation for their academic programs. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) located in the United States is a non-governmental organization that maintains an international directory listing quality assurance bodies, accreditation bodies, and ministries of education in over 170 countries. These groups are authorized by their respective governments to operate as either government agencies or private organizations. Accreditation in

all of its many forms makes sure educational programs and institutions meet established quality standards. It also promotes accountability and consistency across postsecondary education.

Accreditation involves a great deal of work for your school because it has to establish what student achievement measures look like for that institution. Your school also needs to evaluate the curriculum and faculty quality. Where did the faculty earn their degrees and is each faculty member teaching in the correct field? Your school will also need to examine student support services and admissions practices, and ensure institutional compliance. Other items include the financial state of your school and how your seminary's board of directors functions. All of this plays a crucial role in upholding educational standards and accountability in higher education institutions.

How Does It Work?

In most situations, the accreditation process has several steps. Usually, it starts with self-study where your institution will compare itself to a set of standards. To view a specific set of standards, see *Standards of Accreditation* available at ATS.edu. After the self-study is completed, a report is written and submitted to the accreditation agency. For the next step, a committee of peer reviewers comes to your campus to review the self-study with your school. Many times, part of this process is having a library tour and a conversation with the library director. After the visit, the peer reviewers write a report of the visit and recommend a decision to the accrediting agency as to whether your seminary has met the standards. It is the responsibility of the commission from the agency to evaluate the evidence and recommendations to make informed judgments and communicate decisions to relevant stakeholders at your school. Finally, the next accreditation cycle is set, which is usually 7–10 years in the future. This process of continuous review helps ensure your institution maintains compliance with accreditation standards. Although this process seems very involved, accreditation plays an important role in helping future students identify reputable institutions, facilitating credit transfers, helping determine eligibility for federal funding and financial aid, and finally, providing assurance to future employers about the quality of the education received by graduates of your school.

If your school is going through an accreditation process, here are the four top things to remember. First, in higher education, which includes the seminary or theological school you work for, this is a collaborative process that combines self and peer assessment. Everyone in your school is being assessed at the same time, so you are not alone. Second, there are often libraries in your peer institutions that have also gone through this process where you can go to get advice. Sooner or later, everyone goes through an accreditation, and I have shared my accreditation work with other library directors. Third, every school being accredited by the same agency uses the same set of standards. There are no special standards just for your school or seminary. This helps with fairness and helps your school see how well they compare to similar theological schools. Fourth, you will usually get a report from the peer review team you can use to make improvements at your library.

For your seminary, doing and writing the self-study is the hardest part. Every department and program will be compared to a set of standards to judge their quality and effectiveness against established standards that may or may not be non-governmental self-regulation and distinct from state or federal compliance. As was noted above, this all depends on where your school is located and which agency or association your school chooses to be accredited by. Grounding the self-study in your institution's mission, history, and purpose increases respect for institutional autonomy and how diverse schools can be. It also gives an assurance to the public that your school meets or exceeds quality standards through oversight by an external peer review and a commission. Making sure the faculty is involved in accreditation and doing a cyclical review keeps the focus on student learning and development as a critical measure for quality.

Going a bit deeper, the accreditation or reaccreditation usually involves a self-review done by the school before a peer review happens. In the self-review, sometimes also called the self-study, a school looks at its planning, evaluation, and vision. The school is also simultaneously sizing up all aspects of the school, from curriculum to the board of directors, to finances, and sometimes even the library. I want to note this because sometimes accreditation is mistakenly thought of as something to do only for academic programs and degrees. But, instead, a self-review really looks at everything within a school. As mentioned before, at the end of the self-review, the report that is generated is given to a group of peer reviewers. The peer reviewers use the report to look at the quality and integrity of the school and

to assess the school's reliability. Who are the peer reviewers? Each accreditation agency has its own set of standards and rules about who does the accreditation and who can become a peer reviewer. Usually peer reviewers are deans, faculty, financial officers, librarians, and sometimes information technology staff from other schools accredited by the same agency. However, that can vary widely. For example, I have been on an accreditation visit as a peer reviewer and I have been through several re-accreditation visits by people I knew as my peers from other institutions. It can all be a bit confusing if this is your first time. In countries where accreditation is handled at a national level, the reviewers might be government employees. It all depends on the situation and which association is doing the accreditation review.

What Are the Benefits of Accreditation?

While accreditation is not always required, it holds substantial importance in higher education as accreditation influences school funding, credit transferability, and the overall credibility of educational credentials. In other words, being an accredited institution helps schools financially through increased credibility with potential donors. It also makes it easier for students to transfer credits they earned in one school or seminary into another school. Finally, accreditation gives integrity to the degrees granted by accredited institutions. Remember, institutions voluntarily seek accreditation to demonstrate their commitment to meeting established quality standards and ensuring the value of their educational offerings, particularly in countries where it isn't required like the United States or Canada. For your school or seminary, accreditation is a big process and takes up a great deal of time as well as money. But it means your school meets rigorous standards. The work of accreditation within institutions ultimately creates a healthier system of higher education across seminaries and is a mechanism for upholding standards, promoting transparency, and driving ongoing improvement.

If accreditation is so important for your school or seminary, what is in it for the students? For me, the biggest benefit for students in the accreditation process is ensuring they receive a quality education. Students attending accredited schools are more likely to benefit from higher levels of investment in faculty professional development which leads to a better educational experience. Graduates from accredited

colleges and universities often have an advantage over graduates from non-accredited institutions, as accreditation provides a guarantee of completing studies at an institution with a national reputation for quality. This type of acknowledgment is crucial for graduates moving between states or countries, as accreditation ensures consistency and credibility for schools across different regions. In my experience, one of the first items an admissions committee looks at when someone applies to a seminary or school of theology is where that person did their undergraduate work. Where students choose to pursue their education matters, or it would not be so hard to be admitted to certain schools and programs. Accreditation also plays a pivotal role in helping students find employment after they graduate. Many accredited schools help their graduates with ongoing support in job placement. The emphasis on student welfare and academic quality through accreditation demonstrates a commitment to a quality education, which in turn enhances the reputation of both your seminary and its graduates. Additionally, accreditation means that your students have access to federal financial aid, scholarships, and additional education programs that require attendance at an accredited institution. Finally, attending an accredited school or program offers students a demanding course of study that meets or exceeds national educational performance requirements. Accredited schools are required to provide a robust and degree-appropriate curriculum plus well-equipped classrooms, which lead to high graduation rates among students. The excellent faculty and staff in accredited institutions ensure a supportive learning environment that fosters student success. In my experience, seminaries and schools that take accreditation seriously are deeply concerned about student well-being and making sure students finish their academic programs. Accreditation serves as a mark of approval that guarantees, for the accredited school, the highest level of educational excellence for students across various institutions and programs.

How Does It Fit into Graduate or Theological Education?

It has been my experience that, particularly in seminaries and schools of theology, accreditation is an important topic. In many schools, the library director often plays a major role in the accreditation process.

The rationale for this high level of involvement, I think, stems from the fact that many library directors have dual roles as both faculty and staff. As faculty and staff, library directors see both the academic side as well as the institutional side of their school. Librarians are also good at evaluation and assessment because we are always assessing how our libraries are operating and trying to make improvements. In some cases, the library director is named the school's accreditation officer. I was asked to co-chair the most recent accreditation for my school along with a member of the faculty. The co-chair appointment was the start of a two-year process and brought me much closer to understanding the inner workings of my school. While co-chairing an accreditation was a major project that frequently took me away from the library, it was also a way to raise the profile of the library and emphasize the strengths as well as the needs of the library.

Once the peer review visit is over, the peer reviewers will issue a report of their visit. You need to make sure you read the whole report, not just the part regarding the library. Reading through the whole report from the peer reviewers will give you a better idea about how the library can support the academic programs of your school and give you a better understanding of your school's financial outlook. Both the written self-study your school produces for the accreditation visit and all the reports from the peer reviewers can help you better understand how your school operates. I have found understanding more about the overall financial picture has helped me with the next budget cycle planning. You can also use the accreditation process as one more way for you to better advocate for the needs of the library.

While the entire process of accreditation may seem daunting and you may not be ready to co-chair a self-study process, working closely with whoever gets appointed as your school's accreditation officer or accreditation liaison will help you create whatever written pieces you need to contribute to the overall report. If you are working with ATS and Standard 6, which is entirely about the library, you may want to consider reaching out to other librarians who have written a similar report and can mentor you through the process. The work you put into your library's accreditation self-study report has the purpose of accountability and the promise of advocacy to move your library forward in your strategic plan or goals.

What Is the Impact on the Library?

Until now, I have focused mostly on what accreditation is, how it works, and what some of the benefits are of being an accredited institution. In this last section of Chapter 9, I want to concentrate on why accreditation is so important specifically for libraries. Libraries play a crucial role in the accreditation process for higher education institutions. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation website, CHEA.org, lists various institutional and program accreditation bodies, each with specific standards that institutions must meet regarding library resources and services. Although not every accreditor has a distinct standard for libraries, it is important to understand the library's role in each accreditation process.

Broadly speaking, libraries can support accreditation efforts by actively engaging in the accreditation process through the self-study each school must complete as well as other accreditation activities. A library's main way to support the process is through providing essential resources for students and faculty, as well as library services, and demonstrating their effectiveness in supporting academic programs within seminaries and schools of theology. Libraries can also help institutions meet accreditation requirements by providing quality resources and services that support faculty, teaching, and research. What this looks like is going to be different for every library. Some have a mostly print collection that supports a residential community, whereas other libraries have gone digital to support online learning and remote learners. For some, demonstrating the library's role in supporting faculty and students can be instrumental in securing adequate budgets for library services and resources. Libraries can also support accreditation efforts in higher education by ensuring they meet the standards set by accrediting bodies. This is not a new idea in this chapter and a point I have covered above. Yet sometimes the library is expected to have certain programs, like bibliographic instruction, or regularly set reference hours to demonstrate effectiveness within the teaching/learning environment. Libraries are also responsible for playing a crucial role in providing necessary resources such as books, electronic resources, and journals to meet accreditation requirements. In my experience with accreditation standards, I have never seen specific requirements about what resources, how many resources, or in which format those resources need to be held by the library. The lack of specificity in the standards can be difficult for

some library directors. To interpret what standard or standards apply to your library based on your accreditors, you may want to reach out to other library directors to see how they interpret standards.

There are also several challenges libraries face when supporting accreditation efforts. For me, the first is a lack of specific guidelines or a lack of specificity within guidelines, as I referred to in the previous paragraph. As a reminder, some accrediting bodies, such as the Higher Learning Commission, have general language regarding library resources and services within a broader standard related to student services. On the other hand, ATS has a whole standard devoted to the library, but the language can be vague and hard to interpret. These conditions make it challenging for library directors to understand the specific expectations they need to meet for accreditation. Similarly, standards can be hard for resource allocation. More than once I have read and reread Standard 6 from ATS wishing it would tell me the exact language I need to put in my collection development policy so I could fully comply with the standard. Yet an accreditation standard that is too prescriptive may raise questions about equity in resource allocation, requiring you, as the library director, to think critically about how specialized accreditation influences how you purchase resources for academic programs. These are challenging issues to think about.

A wrinkle in the accreditation process for some libraries might be if your school or seminary is accredited by more than one accrediting body. For example, I worked for a theological school that was accredited both by ATS as well as a regional accrediting body. The reason for the double layer of accreditation was that not all the degrees offered by the school were covered by one accrediting agency. Some of the master's level programs were accredited by ATS, but the regional accrediting body also did accreditation for a doctoral-level program. For the library, this meant dealing with the complex evaluation methods of two different accrediting bodies. Because the evaluative guidelines for libraries were different in each accreditation process, librarians were required to navigate through different methods and criteria as set by accrediting bodies that varied in complexity. This complexity certainly may not apply to the library you are directing, or even in your location. However, I think it is worth mentioning in case this is something germane to your situation.

The last challenge I want to address is the financial strains on library resources that may be caused by accreditation requirements and how to ensure that library services align with institutional and program goals within those financial constraints. In some cases, accreditation

requirements may specify that a library must have certain positions, such as a reference librarian and a metadata librarian. Yet the school's budget might not be able to afford someone in both of these professional positions. While I don't have a good solution to offer, I have grouped some job responsibilities together and created hybrid positions. For example, when I was looking for a systems librarian, I found someone who wasn't an exact fit but had skills as an archivist with experience in rare books along with cataloging. I hired that person because they were willing to learn how to manage the library systems and brought other skills I needed since I didn't have an archivist or a cataloger. I have spoken with other library directors who have made similar hiring decisions to cover more than one position with the same person. Particularly in small libraries, I think the more diverse the skill sets of your staff, the better you can cover everything the library needs to do, as I have written about in previous chapters. From my experience, peer reviewers might recommend a position be added to the library staff if they perceive a need, but the same peer reviews are interested in the overall functioning of the library, which might require hybrid positions.

Related to the financial strains particularly of small libraries is the ongoing issue of inadequate funding for infrastructure. In Chapter 2, I discussed working with departments outside of the library such as information technology and even how sometimes libraries and information or instructional technology departments are folded into one unit. But when it comes to accreditation, how your school is structured needs to be explained so the peer reviewers can understand, particularly if departments have been combined. What is important to remember is that you need to be able to explain the impact of financial strains and inadequate funding on the library. Does not having an adequate information technology infrastructure impact the library's ability to provide necessary resources and services to students? What can the library do or not do because there isn't enough money? What is the impact on library services that may affect accreditation? These are all questions to consider as the library director when going through the accreditation process on a tight budget or with inadequate staffing.

With everything said in this chapter about accreditation, the responsibility for representing the library in the accreditation process falls to the library director. For example, as mentioned above, if your school is being accredited by ATS, generally the library director is responsible for writing what is known as Standard 6, which is completely about the library. To recap, the library director is responsible

for evaluating the library and in the case of ATS, they are looking at three areas: purpose and role, staffing and evaluation, and lastly, services and resources. If your school is using a different accreditation agency, then the areas you are evaluating might be different. When you are facing accreditation, there will be subpoints specifying in greater detail what the peer reviewers are looking for and as the library director, you may be expected to supply a short list, usually three to five strengths and weaknesses of the library. You may also be expected to add a current copy of the collection development policy to a list of documents made available to the peer reviewers before they arrive. When the peer reviewers are on campus, you can expect to meet with them to review your accreditation work and tour the physical spaces of your library. You may also be asked to respond to other standards that might overlap with the library, such as student services, or the standards related to the degree programs. While this sounds like a lot of work for the library director, accreditation is very important for your school, as I have outlined in this chapter. If you understand what accreditation is, how it works, the benefits of accreditation and the impact on the library, you should be in good shape to both write a narrative for the peer reviews and meet with them during the visit to your seminary. You don't need to have all the answers, and certainly you don't need to hide anything from the peer reviewers. While this can be an onerous process, accreditation is both good for your library and for your school.

Case Study

Central Seminary is up for reaccreditation by ATS and Randy the library director is nervous. This is his first time as a library director and his first time going through an accreditation visit where he oversaw the library. In a previous job, Randy remembers watching the library director scramble to write the report and then meet with the peer reviewers during their campus visit. He also remembers how his former library director needed to gather statistics to use in writing the report, but Randy doesn't think he knows everything about the library and certainly not about accreditation standards.

To get started, Randy is trying to answer several questions. Should he read the last self-study and, particularly, the library report? How can he find out if the standards have changed or been updated since the last accreditation visit? If he decides to read the previous self-study report, how much of the previous report should he read, the whole thing or just the part about the library? What documentation will he need to write his part of the current self-study? How does he explain the budget changes from the last reaccreditation at Central Seminary? Since Randy is relatively new as the library director, does he have enough experience to work on accreditation or should he have a long-time library staff member work on this instead? While this is just the start of Randy's list of questions, he is also wondering who he can reach out to for help. How does he find another library director who has gone through this process?

Your task in reading through this case study is to see how you might respond in Randy's situation. What would be on your list of questions before starting work on the library's section of a self-study? Would you feel comfortable answering any or all of Randy's questions? If you have been through a self-study or other type of accreditation experience, can you relate to some of Randy's questions?

Key Points from Chapter 9

1. Accreditation ensures that educational institutions meet specific standards of quality and effectiveness in their programs, faculty, facilities, and resources. It provides a mechanism for external evaluation and validation of educational offerings, promoting ongoing improvement and innovation.
2. Accreditation enhances the recognition and credibility of theological schools and seminaries. It signifies that institutions have undergone a rigorous evaluation process and meet established standards of excellence, contributing to their reputation within the academic community and among potential students and employers.

3. Accreditation benefits students by ensuring they receive a quality education and facilitating credit transferability, access to financial aid, and eligibility for professional licensure or certification. For institutions, accreditation opens doors to federal and state funding, grants, and scholarships, while also providing a framework for continuous self-assessment and improvement.

Getting Out the Door

Succession Planning

Although many of us dream about retiring, few library directors actively engage in succession planning. But succession planning is about much more than selecting a person on your staff and naming them as your replacement. In small libraries, one of the issues that comes up is the lack of leadership development, often due to financial issues, which makes succession planning difficult. Also, due in part to small staffs and usually flat organizational structures, there are often very limited opportunities to learn leadership from those within the seminary. But succession planning needs to be intentional and is ultimately about change management.

What exactly do I mean by succession planning? To me, succession planning is a strategic process aimed at identifying and developing individuals, namely library directors, within an organization who have the potential to fill key leadership positions when current staff leave those roles due to retirement, promotion, resignation, or other reasons. Here are some key aspects and benefits of succession planning for you to think about. Succession planning begins by identifying critical roles within the organization that are vital to its success. These may include department leaders, specialized technical roles, or any other

roles essential for achieving organizational goals. Once key positions are identified, the next step is to identify potential successors who have the skills, knowledge, and potential to take on these roles in the future. Successors may be identified from within your organization through talent assessments, performance evaluations, and leadership development programs. You may need to invest in the development and training of potential successors to ensure they are equipped with the skills and competencies needed to excel in their future roles. This may include mentoring, coaching, job rotations, training programs, and other developmental activities and is an important reason for you to be well acquainted with professional development opportunities in your area. Succession planning also helps your school by creating talent pipelines, ensuring a continuous supply of qualified individuals ready to step into key leadership positions when needed. By preparing internal talent, organizations reduce reliance on external recruitment and minimize disruptions during leadership transitions. This also applies to helping other libraries. Often in theological librarianship, people are recommended for certain positions based on their skills and experiences even if the opening isn't in your library. By doing succession planning, you are also helping to mitigate risks associated with leadership vacancies by ensuring that there are capable individuals prepared to step in and maintain continuity in leadership. This reduces disruptions to operations, maintains organizational stability, and preserves institutional knowledge. As a library director, succession planning demonstrates your commitment to employee development and career advancement, which can also enhance employee engagement and retention. Your staff is more likely to remain with a library that offers opportunities for growth and advancement. Finally, by having a pool of qualified successors ready to step into key roles, libraries can adapt more quickly to changes in leadership within your school. Succession planning enhances organizational agility and resilience in the face of uncertainty. Overall, look at succession planning as a proactive approach to talent management that ensures libraries have the leadership capabilities needed to achieve their long-term strategic plans. It fosters a culture of talent development, continuous learning, and organizational readiness, positioning your library for sustained success in ever-changing situations.

Succession planning also extends beyond preparing for unexpected contingencies; it involves a proactive assessment of key positions that might become vacant in the foreseeable future. In other words, you, as the library director, need to be looking ahead to anticipate what needs

your library or school will have in the future and how your current staff could fill those needs. Identifying the potential gaps between your current and future needs is just the initial step. The true essence of succession planning lies in offering targeted solutions for your staff, such as training programs, coaching sessions, special assignments, and various developmental opportunities to equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to seamlessly move into new roles when the time arises. Borrowing from human resources and the technology industry, this intentional development of "bench strength" becomes particularly crucial in smaller libraries where each team member plays a significant role.

Recognizing that the library's most vital and valuable asset is its people lies at the heart of the matter. If you are interested in succession planning, you need to be nurturing a culture that emphasizes the continuous growth and the readiness of your staff and that ensures the organization is well-prepared for both planned and unplanned transitions. In essence, your succession planning becomes a strategic investment in human capital, cultivating a workforce that is not only adaptable to change but also capable of driving the library's mission forward effectively. Thus, the importance of keeping professional development and travel funds in your library budget as discussed in Chapter 4. This is your responsibility as the library director. Let's explore how you can do succession planning.

What Does Succession Planning Look Like?

For many managers and directors, succession planning is something done by the human resources department, not the librarians. According to Madeline Miles on the website BetterUp, succession planning "is the process of preparing employees to assume new roles in your organization when they become available. The goal of succession planning is to ensure a smooth transition after key employees go on sabbatical, resign, retire, or pass away" (2022). You can also think of it as a strategic process that involves identifying critical positions within your library and developing action plans for individuals to assume those roles in the future. For example, I know I will always need at least two positions in my library. The first is someone to work with the students and faculty while the other will be a systems person with cataloging capabilities. This is so I can ensure continuity to library users. On the

other hand, I am also preparing library staff for advancement, thus passing on leadership roles smoothly when a current staff member retires or moves on.

A lot of succession planning revolves around the careful documentation and seamless transfer of knowledge from outgoing employees to new hires. At its core, the process is characteristically intertwined with change management and requires a strategic approach to ensure a smooth transition. However, there are few, if any, opportunities for seamless knowledge transfer because the outgoing employee is usually long gone before the new hire starts. But there are some workarounds to achieve the same effect. Start by taking a step back and conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the current state of your library organization. This internal analysis helps in identifying the library's evolving needs and creates a foundation for effective knowledge transfer. As the library director, what do you think needs to be passed on to the person who will take over for you? While this seems like a lot to do, being intentional with succession planning will help keep your library running smoothly. Even in a small library, incorporating all levels of your staff in these evaluative conversations is a strategic move. Remember in Chapter 2 when I talked about staff? You need to engage your staff at various levels and positions because every position in the library is important, particularly in a small library. This will help you gain valuable insights into their current needs and challenges. By creating an open dialogue, it becomes possible to understand why some of your staff might consider moving on, providing you with essential information to help you with retention efforts. This is meant to be an inclusive approach that not only fosters a sense of transparency within the library, but also empowers employees by recognizing their perspectives in shaping the future. This also allows you to take a proactive approach to evolving demands while nurturing a resilient and knowledgeable staff. Lastly, this approach will help you be both focused and agile when the time comes to replace staff members who have left your institution.

The Benefits of Succession Planning

Succession planning is necessary work, and you might not see the results immediately. But putting in the work to get to know your staff and anticipate what your library needs now and in the future has

benefits. For me, the benefits fall into two broad categories. The first category is related to keeping your library operating and the second is for future planning. Let's explore both in more detail.

For most small libraries, the most immediate need is to stay operational. By that I mean you need to keep serving your students and faculty regardless of staffing needs. The immediate benefits of succession planning are retaining institutional knowledge, minimizing disruption, and, perhaps most importantly, reducing recruitment costs. These benefits became real for me when I started as a library director. In my first months in my new position, I tried to figure out how the former director had developed the budget, handled collection management, and managed the library staff. Unfortunately, there wasn't a lot of information to help me. The documentation just didn't exist, so I had to recreate institutional knowledge by talking with the staff. This experience, soon after becoming a library director, made me start documenting budget decisions, collection management decisions, and even multilayered spreadsheets for managing periodicals and the library credit card. Not only did the documentation give me something to refer to, but it also leaves a trail of my decisions for the next person who is named the library director. Retaining institutional knowledge really minimizes disruptions in library practices. There are many costs involved in recruiting new people. Of course, there are real costs such as advertising and interviewing potential hires. Recruiting new people costs money. But there are also many hidden costs involved, such as how much of your time as the library director will be needed to hire a new person and get the new hire onboarded. You will also need to budget both time and money for any training programs a new hire might need to meet the needs of your library. In my experience, it is very hard to find someone with exactly the skills you need.

As the library director, some of the elements of succession planning from the above paragraph can be overwhelming. Even with the best plans, hiring new people is highly disruptive. Here are four ideas I have developed to minimize the disruptions. First, I have my staff document everything they are working on. That includes, as I mentioned above, spreadsheets and working documents. Second, we established a common drive in Google to put all our manuals and working notes for easy access. You may be wondering why we chose Google over another online storage space. The answer is simple: it was the most convenient place that everyone had access to, and we could set it up ourselves without help from the school's IT department. It

may not be the most secure, but there is nothing in those documents that is important to anyone other than my library staff. Third, I keep everyone's job descriptions up-to-date and review them at least yearly. That way if someone leaves, there is a copy of their latest job description that I can easily update to hire a new person. Fourth, I try to keep more than enough money in the student library workers budget line in case someone leaves and I need to hire additional students to cover some of their responsibilities. This goes along with my previous idea of up-to-date job descriptions in that for certain jobs, there is a section of the job description that can be done by a trained student worker. It does adjust the dynamics of supervising occasionally, but overall, the idea is to be able to cover everything that the library needs to get done. You may have your own set of ideas to add on, minimizing the disruptions when someone stops working for your library. I would encourage you to think about implementing some of my suggestions so you are ready for changes that will come to your library.

Before moving on to more about implementing a succession plan, let's explore some outcomes of being intentional about succession planning. For me, the first outcome has always been reducing the cost of recruiting someone new. I am always looking for ways to cross-train library staff so that if I have to hire a new person, I can have other staff help with the training. It also allows me to have existing staff take on other responsibilities for a short time in between hiring new people. Whatever I can do to use succession planning to reduce some of the costs of replacing a staff member is great for my budget and the budget of my school. Similarly, a second outcome is to identify future leaders from my existing staff and give them opportunities to take on special projects that expand their skill set. I am watching for how they handle change and if they work well under pressure. In the end, I want staff who I know are qualified individuals to be in a pipeline to fill essential roles in the future. Finally, a third outcome is always looking for ways to improve their learning by promoting training and development to them. In a previous chapter, I mentioned finding a leadership program for one of my staff and I am starting to see the rewards of making that possible suggestion as that person takes on new responsibilities around the library. While it may seem like I am doing all of this to make my staff work hard, that is not the point of my intentional succession planning. The intention of my outcomes is to make my staff satisfied with their work and to help them keep their work life interesting. I know all of this staff development may backfire

on me if the person ends up leaving for another library. But at least I know they probably left satisfied with the work they did at my library.

Implementing a Succession Plan

So where do you start in your succession planning? The best place to start is your strategic plan or library goals. Also look at your library's mission statement or the mission statement for the school you serve. Where do you want your library to be in five years? What does your strategic plan say about the future of your library? What will it take to get your staff there? How do you develop leaders within your staff? Is there someone you can identify as a potential replacement for you when you retire? At this point, if you are new to change management and succession planning, the process is more about asking questions. But once you begin to answer your questions, succession planning becomes part of the regular work a small library engages in as I have described above.

The overarching objective of any succession plan is to ensure the attraction and retention of individuals possessing the necessary skills for your library's present and future needs. This strategic process requires the identification of potential leaders of your existing staff within the library and then deliberately developing their skills. Sometimes you are going to get a lot of help from your human resources department, and other times you are going to have to do this on your own. In my current situation, I need to identify the leaders on my staff and devise plans with them to develop their skills. This is something the human resources department doesn't help me with. On the other hand, I know I can rely on my current human resources person to make sure all of the job descriptions are consistent and maintain accurate files of staff evaluations. Similarly, if I need to hire someone new, even for temporary positions, my HR person also screens all the applications, sets up interviews, does reference checks, and so on. This helps me focus more on finding individuals who will be a good fit for my library. Whether you are developing internal candidates or need to look for new people to hire, this is important work for you to engage in. Whether your succession plan is formal or informal, as you develop your staff, you will need to keep in mind if someone might need a pay raise because they are taking on more work. Likewise, you are going to have to budget in order to send them for training or be

looking for free training opportunities. You also need to spend time on doing good staff evaluations so there is documentation of what your staff member has done that helps them get a promotion or a job title change. While you have very little sway over compensation in your library, know that asking someone who has just completed a training program to take on more work may mean you need to advocate with the seminary leadership to get them a salary boost. By addressing these factors, your succession plan becomes a dynamic tool for talent management in your library and ensures that the library is not only attracting but also nurturing individuals who are leaders capable of steering the library and your school toward success.

Essentially, succession planning is bigger than the size of the library you serve and is key to the long-term sustainability of the library in your school. When you foster a culture of continuous development and adaptability in your staff, you are preparing them for the ever-evolving library landscape. Let's face it, change is hard and so is working at change management. It will take time to get started, but with focused effort and a great deal of planning, you can develop your staff into the leaders you need them to be. Then when it comes time to move on yourself, you will leave the legacy of a library well prepared for its next director.

Before the final case study, let me address one question that is frequently asked regarding succession planning. The question is, how do you look for specific people to succeed you as library director? Sometimes this approach may be called an internal or preferred candidate search if you want someone from your current staff to succeed you. There are also targeted searches where you target certain people in other libraries who may be interested in your library and ask them to apply for the position. Then there are also open searches where your institution accepts resumes from anyone and probably advertises for your position to attract a wider circle of interested people. Whether your school decides to go with an internal vs. external candidate to replace you, and no matter what kind of search it is, having up-to-date job descriptions for every member of your staff, as well as documentation about each position, needs to be a priority. There also needs to be good documentation of common practices like cataloging, archives, special collections, and so on. How you serve your students and faculty needs to be communicated forward to your successor. Even if your successor or new hire brings their own ideas to your library, keeping the library running as smoothly as possible will need to be a priority.

Going a bit deeper before the case study, sometimes you will be able to identify your successor, which is the internal search I refer to in the paragraph above. But that doesn't always work out, since sometimes you don't have anyone on your staff you want to have succeed you. Also, it is entirely possible that the person who you want to succeed you leaves before you do. That has been my experience, in that I thought I had a successor, but that person got a better offer from an outside firm. If you cannot do an internal search among your own staff, then you can try going for a targeted search. I have attended professional conferences where a retiring library director talks to potential candidates to see if they are interested in a new position. Likewise, I have received emails and phone calls from seminaries either asking me to apply or wondering if I could refer someone to their search. These are what I consider to be targeted search strategies. Your school is targeting certain people. When you cannot find an internal candidate and a targeted search is not an option, most likely your seminary will go with an open search to find an external candidate. This will involve some kind of advertising and a longer time commitment since in addition to finding the new person, that new person needs to be onboarded to the institution and the library. Let's move into the case study where I will explore these issues a bit more and give you questions to help you think through the issues of succession planning.

Case Study

The final case study is going to be a bit different than those in the previous chapters because this one actually happened to me as a library director. As I look to end my library career through retirement, I looked around my small staff in order to see if someone had the potential to be the next library director. Who among my staff had the right skills, qualifications, and experience to take over for me when I retired? This is a process I started about two years after I came to the school to be the library director and calculated my potential retirement dates. I knew when I wanted to leave, but did I have enough time to get someone ready to take over for me?

My first attempts at finding a potential successor failed for several reasons. The first person I thought might succeed me left to work in a different library shortly after I was hired. Another person I thought might work decided to retire on short notice to pursue something outside of librarianship. Of course both of these people needed to be replaced, which made me see the value of cross-training and developing skill sets beyond their regular job skills. Another person I thought might be a potential successor had no interest in professional development and was really resistant to change. I decided not to pursue this person for future leadership because it was too hard for me to get them interested in self-development. A different person was clear with me that they had no interest in learning something new and every project I gave them to work on came back unfinished. I began to wonder if there was a lack of communication and collaboration hindering my success at succession planning. Was I not being clear enough with my staff that professional development and the future of the library was important to me? Yes, succession planning has its frustrations.

These initial failures led me to make some adjustments in my approach to succession planning. First, I determined my criteria for succession. What qualities would my successor need to fill my job as library director? What skills, experiences, and training or professional development would they need? Second, what was their leadership potential? At my school of theology, the library director is also considered faculty and is routinely given leadership positions in the school as well as the library. Thus I needed to spot my staff's leadership potential. Who took initiative and responsibility? Who was creative and adaptable? Third, I needed to determine if someone on my staff was even interested in becoming the next director. This meant confirming their interest and monitoring work performance assessments while at the same time following where they were in developing their own skills. More than finding the right person, can the right person develop the skills to be a

library director? Finally, I needed to work with that person or persons to develop a transparent process so they would know when I was getting ready to retire and that I would be recommending them for my position.

As a library director, I know the importance of succession planning in higher education because I have seen it done both very well and very badly over the course of my career. While I am still planning to help my school navigate a smooth leadership transition when I retire, the main person I had identified and was training to take over suddenly left for a higher-paying job. This is something you could also encounter as you think about succession planning. Even though my hand-picked person is now gone, I still have to maintain the operational integrity of my library when I retire. What would be the elements in your succession plan that would point toward operational integrity and how deeply you understand the need for a comprehensive succession plan? Where have you seen succession planning or even mentoring done well and done badly, and more importantly, what did you learn from it? These are questions you need to consider as you evolve as the library director at your seminary or institution.

Something that I haven't covered above but have thought about a great deal is communicating your succession plan to everyone who needs to know. I have purposefully not communicated my succession plans as the library director because I am not sure I have prepared a suitable candidate. Although I would like to think I had a successor and would have been happy to include a reference to that person in my resignation letter, that may not always be the case. But I want you to think about the difference between being deliberate about succession planning and simply developing your staff into the best librarians they can be. Could all of the training and other educational opportunities you find for your library staff be best suited to develop more resilient leaders in your library and the wider school? While it would be successful for you in your role as the library director to have a multifaceted process

that requires your careful planning, development, and communication around succession planning, could that same level of process simply create better employees? By proactively addressing the need for succession planning, institutions can ensure a smooth transition of leadership, maintain their operational effectiveness, and continue to serve their academic communities effectively. While you may not be from theological education, which is one of the main audiences for this book, whatever library you find yourself in will benefit from your careful consideration of succession planning.

Let me close this case study by reaching back into my own management experience. As both a department head as well as a library director, I have always tried to give my staff opportunities to develop themselves and move up in the organization when possible. Sometimes in small libraries, there is nowhere for your staff members to go, and they will end up leaving so you will need to start the succession planning process all over again. But while succession planning has always been my ultimate goal, I think the greater goal of succession planning is to help those who work under you to advance their careers to the highest level they wish to take it. Unfortunately, succession planning is not something you as the library director can force on your staff.

Given the many questions I have raised in the case study, think about the different sections in this chapter and how they relate to other chapters, particularly about staffing and library budgets. Even the shape of your collection might be affected by how you staff your library and how you do succession planning. If you are approaching this as a solo librarian and thinking that you have no staff to develop, how do you succession plan with your school's administration for your retirement or if you end up leaving for another job? What will you leave behind for those who follow after you? Good luck!

Key Points from Chapter 10

1. Succession planning is a strategic process aimed at identifying critical roles within the organization and developing individuals to fill those roles in the future. It involves anticipating future needs and preparing employees to assume new roles when they become available.
2. The process begins with identifying critical positions within the organization and then identifying potential successors who have the skills, knowledge, and potential to fill those roles. This may involve talent assessments, performance evaluations, and leadership development programs.
3. Organizations need to invest in the development and training of potential successors to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills and competencies to excel in their future roles. This may include mentoring, coaching, job rotations, and training programs.
4. Succession planning helps create talent pipelines by ensuring a continuous supply of qualified individuals ready to step into key leadership positions when needed. This reduces reliance on external recruitment and minimizes disruptions during leadership transitions, thus preserving institutional knowledge and maintaining organizational stability.

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About the Author

Kris Veldheer has spent much of her career in a library. Perpetually curious, she started working in 1993 at the Burke Library, part of Union Theological Seminary in New York City, as the administrative assistant to the library director. Shortly after taking that position, Kris was persuaded to attend library school and went to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Continuing her career as a professional librarian, she worked at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley for several years, including four as Head of Public Services. Then after three years of service at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia doing instructional technology for the John Bulow Campbell Library, Kris moved to Chicago in 2017 to become the director of the Paul Bechtold Library at Catholic Theological Union. Along the way, she has served as a freelance consultant and a frequent contributor to the Atla Annual Conference. In addition to her MLIS degree, Kris holds a Master of Divinity from Western Theological Seminary, an MA in Educational Technology from San Jose State University, and a Doctor of Ministry from Catholic Theological Union. She currently serves on the Atla Board of Directors.

This is a book about small theological libraries, for small library directors. The subtitle, How to Color with Broken Crayons, is from a chat among a few members of Atla's Small Libraries Interest Group. While discussing library size and resources, the directors longed for what they described as "the big box of 64 crayons to color with" that so many college and university library directors have access to. Instead, small library directors make do with a much smaller box of 8 crayons, which as one member quipped, is usually 8 broken crayons. Small libraries require the "wear many hats" approach often overlooked in books and articles on library management. This book focuses specifically on theological libraries or those libraries serving faith-based institutions with a mixture of theory and practical suggestions.

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