

Book Reviews



Matthew Conner. *The New University Library: Four Case Studies.* Chicago: ALA Editions, 2014. 176p. Paper (ISBN 978-0-8389-1193-8).

In the preface of this book, the author details his involvement as chair of the Committee on Professional Governance (CPG) of the Librarians Association of the University of California (LAUC) during the height of the recent economic recession. As many know, the state of California was hit especially hard during this time and was the “poster child” of the largest recession in the United States in modern times. The author discusses how he led LAUC in envisioning their future role within the UC system during this time period. This book is the result of this experience and is a reflection of the library profession as a whole.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I, composed of eight chapters, is a historical reflection on the history of librarianship, while Part II contains four case studies of medium to large publicly funded universities. The eight chapters of Part I examine the profession’s history and present through the lens of several categories, first compiled for the author’s UC report: reference, personnel, technology, collections, buildings, campus roles, and library culture. In each of these short chapters, significant personages, directions, trends, and quotes are discussed along with issues and topics of interest in the present environment. The four case studies presented in Part II are meant to provide a balance between theory and practice, by detailing how four universities are currently meeting the challenges and opportunities of their campuses and communities: the University of California, Davis; the University of California, Merced; the University of Hawaii at Manoa; and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. There are some interesting juxtapositions here: the author has personal ties with Davis and Manoa; UC Merced and UC Davis are part of the largest academic library consortium in the world; the University of Illinois library and its graduate school are held up as the epitome of the traditional research library, while Merced’s library was built as a “library of the future.” These connections yet differences are showcased by the author, who indicates that none of these libraries are unusual or exceptional by definition or by what they have done, yet are representative of what all academic libraries are facing with the opportunities and challenges of the twenty-first century.

In short, each of the highlighted academic libraries has focused on its historical context and challenges to move forward in relation to the seven-fold categories presented in Part I: UC Davis, by scaling up traditional services locally yet transcending those services through its collaborations in the UC system; UC Merced as the newest UC campus, with its focus on space and electronic resources yet also through its commitment and partnerships in the UC system; UH Manoa through its cultural sensitivity and strong area collections and services; and Illinois, with its technology and internal reorganization program. The author highlights this “organization as organism” model as more appropriate at capturing the complexities of today’s academic libraries rather than the political/coalition or the hierarchical/mechanistic models that are often used. In the conclusion, some of these organic themes within the case studies are mentioned and detailed, providing some context and ties from which to bind together the disparate yet common challenges inherent in today’s information society. The term “symbolic librarianship” is used to round out the overall idea that the author wishes to convey regarding the state of the library profession today.

This approach to both librarianship and academic libraries provides an interesting perspective, grounded in the life and experiences of one person, yet balanced by

historical and case study information. I also was a part of the UC system during the turbulent time described by the author, chairing the Next Generation Technical Services (NGTS) Phase 2 Enterprise-Level Collections Management Services task force (see <http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/content/ngts-phase-2-march-december-2010> for the executive summary, final report, and appendix of this group). The UC libraries are known for their collaborative and well-organized inter-institutional teams; and, while numerous changes and reforms were initiated due to the economic and financial realities after 2008, many others that were more transformative and indeed inspirational were not implemented due to internal political and administrative issues. That said, it is interesting that both UC Davis and UH Manoa were included as case studies, given some of the personnel and human resources challenges currently ingrained in the libraries at those universities, based on my own work experience with these two libraries. Their inclusion is understandable (based on the author's life experience and current place of employment), so one may want to focus on the author's "neither unusual nor exceptional, but representative" statement in the Preface regarding these two academic libraries in particular. The book, as it stands, can be viewed as a single person's reflection on where librarianship and libraries have been and are going, similar to *Our Enduring Values: Librarianship in the 21st Century* (ALA Editions, 2000) by Michael Gorman, and *Future Libraries: Dreams, Reality & Madness* (ALA Editions, 1995) by Walt Crawford and Michael Gorman. A little bit of reality, common sense, and insider knowledge need to be mixed in when reading through the case studies; things are often not as innovative or forward-thinking as those involved in them seem to think, nor can those who are on the outside of those campuses have an understanding of current internal personalities or politics that are holding back change and reorganization. —Bradford Lee Eden, Valparaiso University

Christopher Hollister. *Handbook of Academic Writing for Librarians*. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association, 2013. 250p. Revised edition. Paper, \$56.00 (ISBN 978-083898736-0).

Librarians are important contributors to the field of library science. Professional publications written by professionals in the field document and advance LIS theory and practice. A handbook to assist with the professional endeavor of writing and publishing in one's field is a valuable tool. The *Handbook of Academic Writing for Librarians* aims to be an informative resource for LIS professionals and students. It is designed for beginning and experienced authors. The author has identified key elements of successful professional and scholarly writing and publication: developing an idea; writing competencies; making a professional contribution to the field; writing professionally; engaging and committing good academic writing; finding publishing opportunities; and communicating scholarship in the current landscape of the digital age. The handbook's ideas and arguments are rational, understandable, and supported with concrete examples.

The handbook's content is based on the author's knowledge and experiences as a reviewer and editor. Additionally, the author conducted interviews with a wide range of published authors in the field of library science. Integrating his own professional writing background as well as the perspectives and experiences of the interviewees, the author developed a framework to guide the reader through the writing process. The author's intent is to ensure that prospective and current writers have the knowledge and competencies to produce scholarly academic writing.

Five chapters with supporting examples take the reader from introducing and defining good academic writing to writing a scholarly book proposal. The chapters scaffold the learning process of academic writing in a series of building block chapters or steps for the reader. Each chapter also serves as a quick reference for or standalone