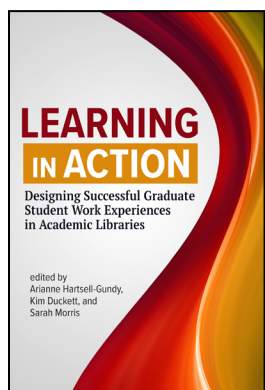# Book Reviews

*Learning in Action: Designing Successful Graduate Student Work Experiences in Academic Libraries.* Arianne Hartsell-Gundy, Kim Duckett, and Sarah Morris, eds. Chicago, IL: ACRL Editions, 2022. 272p. Paper, $86 (ISBN: 978-0-8389-3680-1).

*Learning in Action: Designing Successful Graduate Student Work Experiences in Academic Libraries*, edited by Arianne Hartsell-Gundy, Kim Duckett, and Sarah Morris, describes a wide range of case studies and learning experiences dedicated to graduate student employment at academic libraries across the United States and Canada. A broad range of institutions are represented, from R1 to smaller schools, as well as universities with and without an LIS program.

Each of four sections includes chapters written by librarians who have created, implemented, surveyed, and/or reimagined their library's graduate student work programs. Many chapters emphasize the need to increase diversity in academic libraries while providing graduate students with experiential learning, mentoring opportunities, practical professional skills, and pathways to employment. The shared goal across chapters is to give future academic library professionals meaningful experiences that will provide them with the tools to succeed in their future careers.

As noted throughout the book, it is important to provide graduate student employees with a sense of belonging and agency, not merely tasks to complete. Involving graduate workers in library committees, communications, and staff development are effective ways to prepare future employees for the organizational culture of libraries and for academia in general. LIS student employment also helps provide context for concepts learned in the classroom that can be abstract in the absence of hands-on experiences.

The first three parts of the book focus on designing, building, and assessing graduate student practicums and similar opportunities. "Creating Access Pathways" details the barriers that both students and employers may face when trying to participate in or implement experiential opportunities for graduate students. Several chapters refer to the cost of these opportunities, financial and otherwise, as well as the dedicated staff time and effort it takes to run and grow them to be more effective for future participants. Authors also point to the need to increase diversity in academic libraries through intentional recruitment. Flexible and hybrid options, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, are also crucial. Because the book was produced during the height of the pandemic, many chapters address the changing nature of academia, libraries, and student employment in this new era.

While most case studies and examples address working with LIS graduate students, the book's third section discusses working with graduate students without that background. These chapters are especially relevant for libraries that want to build opportunities for graduate students across campus. Leveraging campus partnerships can help libraries make the most of their non-LIS graduate student employees. As a librarian who works at an institution without an LIS degree program, I found this section especially pertinent as it clarifies the ways that

graduate students can contribute to my library's initiatives, even without an LIS background or coursework.

Part 4, "Centering the Person," addresses the need for academic libraries to step away from a one-job-fits-all approach and toward an empathy-driven employment structure for graduate students. This chapter will be especially useful to managers, supervisors, and mentors of graduate student assistants who want to understand and collaborate better with their employees. It is important to note that employing graduate students is not just beneficial to the library, but also to the student who wants to gain meaningful work experience before facing the extremely competitive academic library job market. This is a helpful reminder to librarians, who were themselves at one point LIS students, to remember what it was like to be hungry for information and experiences that would give them the edge while on the job hunt.

"Voices from the Field" anecdotes included throughout the text, feature graduate student employees sharing what they learned and gained from their experience working in the academic library. These personal stories provide important context that supports the need to implement and reimagine graduate student employment and the impact it has on future librarians and professionals. As contributor Allison Kittinger says, "the specific combination of courses and work responsibilities I had was ultimately crucial to my developing confidence in working in a library setting and a sense of preparedness for postgraduation academic library jobs" (114). Kittinger captures a truth first stated in the introduction: graduate students aren't our future colleagues, they *are* our colleagues. — *Maria Atilano, University of North Florida*

**Brian Michael Murphy**. *We the Dead: Preserving Data at the End of the World.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2022. 316 p. Hardcover $32.95 (ISBN: 9781469668284); ebook $23.99 (ISBN: 9781469668307). LCCN: 2021-058924.
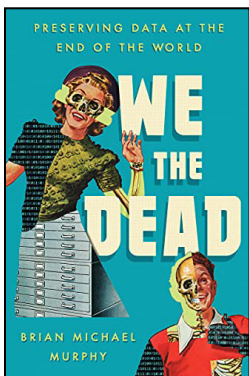
Librarians tend to look askance at commentators on their work and profession from outside the guild. Henry Petroski, an engineer, wrote *Book on the Bookshelf* (1999), looking at the practical construction principles of bookshelves through history, and was never taken seriously by librarians—perhaps also in light of his (joking?) recommendations to arrange books on bookshelves by the author's first name, or by the first letter of the second-to-last word of the title. Umberto Eco's *Name of the Rose* (1981) was nothing if not a roman à clef about the perfidy of librarians hoarding secrets—which of course *we* know we never do. A final example, the pharaonic undertaking by two other outsiders, Sergey Brin and Larry Page, to create a universal digital library, was, as Deanna Marcum and Roger C. Schonfeld argue in *Along Came Google: A History of Library Digitization*, brought down largely through the opposition of major library organizations, ALA, ARL, and ACRL.

So now we have a book with "preserving data" in the subtitle that is decidedly *not* by a librarian, not even a digital librarian, but by a self-described "media archaeologist" (87). The author is also a poet and an essayist, not to mention dean of the college at Bennington. Like the other outsiders mentioned, Brian Michael Murphy makes disturbing, heretical observations, among them that "[t]he practice of data preservation is itself inherently toxic" (33); or that librarians "preserve through annihilation" (63). He even relates the will to preserve—which in our field is axiomatic—to what he (following André Bazin) calls the "Mummy Complex" (7), updated to today's world as the "data complex": a vast, extrasomatic matrix that aspires