Developing Core Leadership Competencies for the Library Profession

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The development of competencies, competency lists, or competency models has become a popular way to assess the strengths, needs, and potential contributions of individuals in an organization. The success of libraries as organizations is determined by the actions of the individuals who work in those libraries; the success of those individuals in carrying out the missions of those libraries is in large measure a reflection of the type and quality of leadership. Successful library leaders demonstrate certain skills that are instrumental in the delivery of desired outcomes. We usually think of the demonstration of these skills as competencies.

Creating a list of competencies for library leaders is a key objective envisioned in the strategic plan of the Library Leadership Administration and Management Association (LLAMA). This task was assigned to five members of the 2008 class of the American Library Association's Emerging Leaders Program. The project is a critical first step toward a list of competencies or standards that would serve at least three types of users: library educators planning curricula, aspiring library leaders hoping to advance their careers, and experienced library leaders seeking to advance the profession. This article will provide an overview of the library literature addressing competency models, describe the process used to develop the competency model for library leadership, review competency models found in the literature of other professions, and discuss the proposed core competency model for leadership in our profession.

There does not appear to be a universally agreed upon definition of *competency*. Dole, Hurych, and Liebst note that a review of the library literature reveals "ambiguity and confusion over the definition and nature of 'competencies.'"[1] Giesecke and McNeil define core competencies as "the skills, knowledge, and personal attributes that contribute to an individual's success in a particular position."[2] McNeil modifies the definition in a later publication to "the skills, knowledge, abilities, and attributes that employees across an organization are expected to have to contribute successfully within a particular organizational process."[3] Bartram, Robertson, and Callinan define competencies as "sets of behaviors that are instrumental in the delivery of desired results or outcomes."[4] Kurz and Bartram are very precise in their effort to distinguish between *competence* and *competency*: "Competence is about mastery in relation to specified goals or outcomes. The measurement of competence at work involves the assessment of performance in the workplace against some pre-defined set of occupational or work-related standards or requirements. . . . Competencies, on the other hand, relate to the behaviors underpinning successful performance; what it is people do in order to meet their objectives; how they go about achieving the required outcomes; what enables their competent performance."[5] Understanding the distinction is crucial. Much of what is found in the library literature is related to *competence*; in this article the discussion centers on *competencies*, as defined by Kurz and Bartram.

Leadership Competencies in the Library Literature

Although a vast amount of literature addressing leadership competencies is available for many professions, and numerous professional organizations have developed lists of competencies for practitioners in their respective fields, there is little in the library literature addressing competencies for library leaders. There are, however, articles that describe competencies needed by practitioners in various areas of librarianship or that discuss skills needed by specific types of librarians. A search for the phrase "leadership competencies" in the Library Literature and Information Science Database yielded only three articles. By contrast, a search for "leadership competencies" in other discipline-specific databases produced many results: Business Source Premier yielded 133, ERIC (via EBSCO) yielded 70, and ProQuest

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Nursing and Allied Health Source 248 hits.[6] These results suggest three possibilities: other professions have already been addressing an issue that librarianship has overlooked; the project team could benefit by drawing on research from other fields; and leadership competency documents designed for other professions could serve as useful models in developing core leadership competencies for the library profession. It should be noted that the project team did indeed locate and make use of other sources–including articles–that address leadership competencies for librarians, but these were not found by searching for "leadership competencies" in the Library Literature and Information Science Database.

There are a number of competency documents created by the American Library Association (ALA), its divisions, and other library associations. ALA has been working on a core competency document for a number of years; in September 1999, ALA President Sarah Long appointed a Task Force to develop a draft statement of core competencies.[7] The draft document describes in detail the development of the draft through 2005. In 2007, ALA President Leslie Burger appointed a Presidential Task Force on Library Education to deliberate on issues related to core curriculum, educational values, accreditation, and skills development. This task force has developed a draft document, "Core Competences of Librarianship."[8] The current draft has been approved by ALA's Presidential Task Force on Library Education, but has not yet been approved by ALA Council.[9] The ALA Presidential Task Force on Library Education met at the ALA Annual Conference in 2008 and approved a final draft submitted for Council approval at Midwinter 2009.[10]

Four of the membership divisions of the ALA have created documents outlining competencies appropriate to the types of libraries or types of functional specialization that each division serves. Three of these divisions–the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA), and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA)–have produced documents in which competencies are the primary focus. The Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) includes on its website the ALCTS Educational Policy Statement; the appendix to this document, entitled "Knowledge and Skills," includes what is essentially a list of competencies appropriate for members of ALCTS. None of these competency documents focus on leadership, but rather on specific areas of professional knowledge.[11] There are also relevant competency documents from the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), the Art Libraries Society of North American, the American Association of Law Libraries, the Music Library Association, and the Special Libraries Association.[12]

Although a search for "leadership competencies" in the Library Literature and Information Science Database yielded only three articles, the team located numerous documents that informed the development of the proposed model. A review of the library literature addressing core competencies reveals a number of attempts over the past ten years to identify and define core competencies for library practitioners. Giesecke and McNeil define and discuss core competencies in the context of the "learning organization."[13] They also describe a process that could be used for the development of core competencies for librarians and library staff in a chapter from an ALA publication, *Staff Development: A Practical Guide*.[14] One chapter includes a core competency model from the university libraries at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. McNeil was also the compiler of an Association of Research Libraries SPEC Kit No. 270 devoted to core competencies. The publication includes the results of a survey designed to investigate the status of core competencies in research libraries. Most of the kit is devoted to two types of documents gathered from major universities: the first set describes competencies, and the second set consists of performance management and evaluation documents.[15] Naylor describes the characteristics of core competencies and discusses how libraries might use competencies as a tool for the development and provision of superior services.[16] Moran, referring to the work of the ALA Core Competencies Task Force (2002 draft), discusses core competencies for librarians and their relation to valued services in terms that "will make a difference in the lives of citizens and students."[17] Helmick and Swigger discuss a project to identify competencies needed by various library practitioners: those who work in directorship roles at small libraries but do not have accredited master's degrees in librarianship, those who have little or no formal training in librarianship, or who had little or no work experience in libraries prior to assuming their positions.[18] To return to the distinction made at the beginning of this article between *competence* and *competencies*, all of these articles are essentially describing *competence*, defined by Kurz and Bartram as "mastery in relation to specified goals or outcomes . . . the assessment of performance in the workplace against some pre-defined set of occupational or work-related standards or requirements;" and not *competencies*, defined as "the behaviors underpinning successful performance; what it is people do in order to meet their objectives; how they go about achieving the required outcomes; what enables their competent performance."[19]

Notably absent from most of the library literature discussed thus far is a discussion of core leadership competencies. However, two articles by Hernon, Powell, and Young that appeared in *College & Research Libraries* in 2001 and 2002, as well as two follow-up volumes, Hernon, Powell, and Young's *The Next Library Leadership: Attributes of Academic and Public Library Directors*, and Hernon and Rossiter's *Making a Difference: Leadership and Academic Libraries*, address leadership competencies for academic librarians.[20] In the first article, Hernon, Powell, and Young review position announcements that appeared in *College & Research Libraries News* and highlight types of attributes

that are mentioned in these ads that fall into six areas: leadership, planning, abilities, skills, individual traits, and areas of knowledge. Although not a formal competency model, the competencies identified are very similar to the competencies that the project team would discover in fully-developed competency models created for other professions.[21] Similarly, the lengthy list of key attributes identified by the authors as a result of interviews with fifteen library directors is more representative of competencies found in leadership models outside the library literature than any of the competency documents developed by various ALA divisions and other library associations, which identify competencies for specific types of librarians. This list of key attributes is divided into four primary areas, or meta-competencies, which are abilities, skills, individual traits, and areas of knowledge. However, unlike the other competency models found outside of the library literature, the competencies within each list are listed alphabetically with no attempt to group like competencies together beyond the division into the four aforementioned areas.[22]

The second article by Hernon, Powell, and Young includes a graphic representation in which the authors identify and categorize present and future attributes of prospective directors of member institutions of the Association of Research Libraries. Although the graphic is not referred to as a competency model for library leadership, it is the most comprehensive leadership competency model found in the library literature that does not refer to library-specific skills or knowledge. The authors have grouped these attributes under three major headings: (1) managerial attributes, which includes three subheadings: managing, leading, and planning; (2) personal characteristics, which includes three subheadings: dealing with others, individual traits (general), and individual traits (leadership); and (3) general areas of knowledge.[23]

Addressing the oft-predicted shortage of people attracted to careers in librarianship and the expected wave of retirements by leaders in the field, Hernon, Powell, and Young expand upon their earlier research with the publication of *The Next Library Leadership: Attributes of Academic and Public Library Directors*. The authors provide a thorough assessment of effective leadership, as well as identify the traits needed by the next generation of academic and public library directors.[24] Perhaps the most comprehensive work on library leadership to date is Hernon and Rossiter's *Making a Difference: Leadership and Academic Libraries*, an edited work of eighteen individually authored chapters. Although none of the chapters offer a specific leadership competency model, the book provides a thorough overview of the issues of leadership in academic libraries.[25]

Four articles focus on particular sets of competencies relative to *specific* roles that a library leader might play. Winston and Dunkley present a rationale for identifying core leadership competencies related to development and fund-raising relevant to academic librarians and administra-

tors.[26] Shannon provides a comprehensive review of literature about competencies of school librarians. In the process of her extensive review, Shannon identifies two broad meta-competencies that are also applicable to library leadership: interpersonal and communication skills, and leadership and "change agentry."[27] Dole, Hurych, and Liebst examine the use of assessment data by library leaders and conclude that for library leaders in Carnegie MA I universities, the ability to evaluate data and use such data for decision making is a core competency for library leaders.[28] Promis discusses the concept of emotional intelligence in librarianship. The article reports on a study and review of job postings published in *College & Research Libraries News* to determine the extent to which the soft skills of emotional intelligence are named in job advertisements. Promis concludes that a significant percentage of job postings are not designed to attract emotionally intelligent individuals, but for those with particular hard skills.[29]

There are numerous leadership and management competency documents to be found in the literature of other professions. Useful discussions that specifically address the development of leadership competency models can be found in the literature of nursing and health care, business and nonprofit management, the military, and law—as well as from the literature of organizational effectiveness and related areas. This literature proved to be useful both for naming competencies appropriate for a leadership model and for providing examples of how such a model might be constructed.

The Process

This section describes the process used to develop this proposed model of core leadership competencies for the profession. The 122 members of the 2008 class of Emerging Leaders were divided into 26 groups of 4 or 5 members; each group was assigned a particular project. The team assigned to the competencies project was comprised of five librarians: Shorlette Ammons-Stephens, Holly J. Cole, Keisha L. Jenkins-Gibbs, Catherine Fraser Riehle, and William H. Weare Jr. The project team was mentored by W. Bede Mitchell, former president of LLAMA and the dean of the library at Georgia Southern University. As project team mentor, Mitchell supplied a number of documents to the team to help facilitate the process, including five student reports on management competencies that had been provided to him by Keith Swigger, a faculty member in the School of Library and Information Studies at Texas Woman's University.

As soon as the project teams were selected in November 2007, the members of the Emerging Leaders team for competencies began communicating with one another via e-mail about the assignment. The project team began working on their assigned project at the 2008 ALA Midwinter Meeting during the all-day session for the 2008

class of Emerging Leaders, facilitated by Connie Paul and Maureen Sullivan, with the goal of completing the project by the next meeting of the Emerging Leaders at the 2008 ALA Annual Conference. The work of all of the Emerging Leaders Project Teams was to be completed through research, a literature review, and interviews—and might also draw on the experiences of the Emerging Leaders themselves. The distance of members from one another necessitated that that much of the work be completed online as well as via telephone.

The planning period allotted at the Midwinter Meeting was invaluable as it gave the group time to develop a sound foundation on which to start the project. The group divided key tasks between the members, and, with input from all members, a detailed timeline was created with a series of deadlines to keep the team on schedule. This timeline called for an objective to be met approximately every two weeks; throughout the spring one member sent reminders as each deadline approached. Electronic communication was essential to staying on track and completing the tasks. Google Documents enabled group members to write collaboratively, and to post, edit, and review all work completed, as well as make steady progress. The team used Google Documents as the platform for the preparation and sharing of a bibliography, the development of interview questions, posting of interview transcripts, development of a core competency list, and composition of a final report. Information about the progress of the project was posted on the Emerging Leaders' wiki. One team member volunteered to take the lead in the development of a poster for the presentation session at the 2008 ALA conference in Anaheim, California, while another volunteered to write a report summarizing the project.

Interviews

In order to gain practical insight about library leadership, the group decided to interview current leaders in the profession. Interviewees were selected strategically, representing many aspects of librarianship, including those working in public libraries, academic libraries, and special libraries—as well as leaders in ALA and its divisions, deans and directors of the institutions at which the project members work, and personal mentors who hold leadership positions. The team also intentionally sought to include interviewees representative of the level of cultural diversity desired in the profession. During the spring, the team agreed upon a list of interviewees, developed and produced a set of uniform interview questions, conducted the interviews, and shared notes and transcripts with other team members.

Much of the information and feedback gleaned from these interviews guided the development of the group's competency list. The interview questions focused not only on the development of the model, but on the definition of leadership, the acquisition of leadership skills, important

theories of leadership, and recommended resources for potential leaders. During the process of conducting interviews, additional ideas and concepts were revealed, some of which invited conversation among the group's members as to what might need to be added to the developing competency list. The group reviewed these ideas, comparing similar thoughts among the interviewees as well as the concepts discovered during the literature review process. In addition to providing the group with an opportunity to gain valuable perspective about what makes a great library leader, the experience also afforded a unique chance to connect on a more personal level with library leaders whom they already knew, as well as an opportunity to talk to library leaders they may never have met. The individuals selected each possess a unique perspective on leadership; yet they all share a vibrant hope for future leaders in librarianship, and provide a fascinating range of views on professional leadership.[30]

The Development of the Leadership Competency Model

As a result of the interview process, as well as ongoing reading and research, thinking about the end product began to evolve. As the competency list grew in complexity, it became clear that a mere list was not adequate. It was natural to want to organize the list and to group related competencies, thus a competency model approach was developed. Heather Bock, in *Constructing Core Competencies: Using Competency Models to Manage Firm Talent*, defines a competency model as "a customized list of behaviors and skills used to distinguish or predict employee performance within a business."[31] Silzer asserts that such a competency model is not a prescription for effective leadership, but represents an attempt to capture the experience, lessons learned, and knowledge of seasoned leaders to provide a guiding framework for the benefit of others and the organization.[32]

The methodology also changed in response to the decision to create a competency model. Originally, it was thought that all five members of the project team would add competencies to a shared list, divide the list among the team members, and each person would contribute explanation and documentation of specific, assigned competencies. Instead, it was decided that all members could contribute to this latter part of the process as they had done in building the initial list. Related competencies were grouped under four meta-competencies; the project team also decided to add a third level to the model, adding a phrase (or phrases) that began with an active verb to describe and define each competency. While continuing to add to and modify the list, team members began to draft a written report describing the process and outlining the competencies, while also developing a poster to present at the 2008 ALA Annual Conference.

Literature from other professions provides many examples of the form a leadership competency model might take. Literature of business and from nonprofit management has proven to be a rich source of information about the development of core competencies. Prahalad and Hamel, in a seminal article on corporate competencies, argue that a corporate portfolio should consist of competencies, rather than be a portfolio of businesses. They make a distinction between core competencies, core products, and end products. Although they are writing about core competencies of corporations, the argument they put forth has particular relevance to management of the competencies of people.[33]

McCauley and Hughes, in a chapter of *Governing, Leading, and Managing Nonprofit Organizations* entitled "Leadership in Human Services: Key Challenges and Competencies," present the findings from their own research that focuses on understanding the jobs of nonprofit managers who provide services that meet the social needs of a community. They identify and define sixty-eight core leadership challenges and examine what incumbent human service administrators think are the most important competencies for success in leadership positions. Most significantly, the authors rank-order the qualities presented in the questionnaire by the percentage of respondents who identify that quality as one of their top eight (out of sixteen in the questionnaire). The most significant competencies important for success (the seven competencies identified as important by at least than 50 percent of respondents) are: acting with flexibility, resourcefulness, leading subordinates, integrity, setting a development climate, hiring talented staff, and team orientation.[34]

Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, in their book *Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence*, believe that leadership is emotional; those leaders who excel in making their employees feel good are more successful in making them feel engaged, furthering the aims of the organization, and thus these leaders are more successful. The authors offer a competency model consisting of capabilities grouped in four areas: self-awareness, self management, social awareness, and relationship management.[35]

Hartman, Conklin, and Smith, in a thematic review of talks given by prominent business leaders to students enrolled in a particular leadership course, compare the themes of the talks to the themes appearing in recent articles about leadership and leadership development to identify the places where advice of business leaders and theories found in current literature converge. The authors identify six themes: full commitment, people orientation, education, difficult challenges, communication, and ethics. This grouping is suggestive of what a meta-competency model for leadership might look like. The authors note that while several studies provide lists of abilities, behaviors, and characteristics necessary for leadership, no master competency list exists.[36]

Nursing and health care literature is also a rich source of information about leadership competencies, perhaps due to the parallels between the library profession and health care professions. Successful physicians, nurses, and other health professionals often find themselves in managerial, administrative, and leadership roles, though such a career choice may not have been intentional, just as happens in librarianship. The nursing profession continues to be plagued by nursing shortages; recruiting within that profession for staff to take leadership positions is increasingly difficult. In an effort to address challenges in recruiting talented staff into nursing leadership positions, Sherman, Bishop, Eggenberger, and Karden describe their research and the resulting nursing leadership competency model. One hundred and twenty nurse managers were interviewed to gain an understanding of the role of the nurse managers and the leadership skills and competencies needed by nurse managers. The authors present a model with six competency categories: personal mastery, interpersonal effectiveness, human resource management, financial management, caring (for staff, patients, and self), and systems thinking. Each competency category is accompanied by an extensive list of phrases that describe that category.[37] In a guest editorial in *Orthopaedic Nursing*, McWilliams briefly describes the development of a leadership competency model for the National Association of Orthopaedic Nurses, adapted from Sherman's model of leadership effectiveness. She presents the model as a graphical figure and as a table. The table has five domains (or meta-competencies): personal mastery, interpersonal effectiveness, strategic thinking, stewardship, and resource management. Each domain has between seven and thirteen phrases describing that domain; each statement begins with a verb (inspires, assumes, utilizes, promotes, fosters, and so on) that indicates actions that a person possessing those qualities would likely demonstrate.[38]

Discussion of the development of leadership competency models can also be found in the literature of military science. Wong et al., addressing both academic and military contexts, noted that the literature is "replete with long lists of the knowledge, skills, and abilities need by strategic leaders of the future" but that they are problematic in that "the lists suggest that a strategic leader must 'Be, Know, and Do' just about everything."[39] This is indeed problematic. The authors suggest that the process of identifying leadership competencies becomes one of reducing current lists, and they proceed to identify and discuss six meta-competencies: identity, mental agility, cross-cultural savvy, interpersonal maturity, world-class warrior, and professional astuteness. Horey and Fallesen examine and compare core constructs from both military and civilian leadership frameworks and also conclude that leadership competency modeling is problematic. They provide recommendations to improve the methods and outcomes of leadership modeling.[40]

Heather Bock, in *Constructing Core Competencies: Using Competency Models to Manage Firm Talent*, out-

lines how attorneys might develop and apply a competency model to the management of a law firm in order to build talent and grow the firm. In the process, she provides background on the development of competency models in American business and how to move from theory to practice. Her description of the process of development and implementation of a competency model in the legal profession is in itself a model of how such a process might work in other fields.[41]

Hollenbeck, McCall, and Silzer present four letters in which they exchange views about the value of leadership competency models. The letters are based on a debate that originally took place at the 2003 meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Hollenbeck and McCall assert that the growing use of competency models is based on questionable assumptions, while Silzer argues that competencies are helpful in the development of leadership skills.[42]

The Tufts Leadership Competencies, available on Tufts University Human Resources site, is an example of the application of a competency model in an academic setting. This document consists of six general competencies, each accompanied by a bulleted list that describes the competency in detail. The document is an excellent example of a competency model and, although designed with academia in mind, it is comprehensive and the approach is broad, and thus it could be applied to organizations outside of the university setting.[43]

The Core Leadership Competency Model

After much discussion and review, the project team agreed on the inclusion of four central leadership competencies, or meta-competencies: cognitive ability, vision, interpersonal effectiveness, and managerial effectiveness. Within these four meta-competencies, a total of seventeen broad competencies were identified. The team found it necessary to further develop each competency so that all members would have a shared understanding. Horey and Fallesen affirm the idea of supplying additional detail that describes behaviors that elucidate each competency: "Competencies are generally no more than labels that require additional detail to communicate how they relate to leadership and behavior. This detail may come in the form of definitions, elements or subcomponents of the competencies, and behaviors, actions or other indicators of manifesting the competency or elements."[44] Thus, each competency is followed by two to five phrases that describe and define that competency. The model proposed by the LLAMA Emerging Leaders group is presented and discussed below.

COGNITIVE ABILITY

Problem-Solving

- Demonstrates the ability to actively and creatively solve problems

- Able to solve problems in a thorough, yet timely manner
- Able to step back from a situation in order to suggest an objective solution
- Fosters an environment that encourages others to create solutions for their own problems

Decision Making

- Assumes responsibility for making critical decisions
- Acts decisively, making sound and timely decisions
- Shows transparency in decision making

Reflective Thinking

- Demonstrates the ability to accurately assess shortcomings and assets of the organization
- Able to recognize and implement opportunities for continuous improvement

The cognitive ability meta-competency includes problem solving, decision making, and reflective thinking. Promis, in her discussion of emotional intelligence and what are sometimes termed "soft skills," defines cognitive skills as "higher order thinking skills such as creative thinking, critical and analytical thinking, data manipulation and synthesis, and decision-making."[45] When asked about the personal qualities that are important to being a successful leader in our field, Losinski put the cognitive ability element in plain language: successful leaders are "really smart and they consistently take time to not just announce decisions, but to explain the reasons for decisions."[46] Beyond intelligence, the focus here is on the personal processes a leader undertakes when working through problems, making decisions, and assessing the institution as a whole. Whether addressing problems or making decisions, the ability to act decisively is vital to good leadership and is essential to the overall health and success of the organization.

VISION

Global Thinking

- Exhibits the ability to think beyond the institution and current issues therein and considers the impact of the institution in the greater community and beyond
- Demonstrates the ability to consider ideas, environments, and technologies that impact communities and the institution on a broader scale
- Able to implement global ideas appropriately scaled for the organization

Creative/Innovative

- Fosters creativity and innovation by encouraging inventive thoughts and experimentation
- Demonstrates the ability to think innovatively about the mission and goals of the organization

Forward Thinking

- Shows foresight by anticipating problems as well

as opportunities

- Exhibits the ability to envision both positive and negative consequences/outcomes
- Inspires others to think creatively about what might be, rather than just what is

The vision meta-competency includes the abilities to think globally, think creativity and foster innovation, as well as the ability to be forward-thinking. Thus, the focus is on a leader's ability to see beyond the institution and to effectively develop a dynamic, forward-looking environment in the context of local, regional, and global trends. Sherman describes big picture thinkers as those who "make it a point to try to develop a good understanding of how the area that they lead fits into the whole of the organization and to respect the perspective of other disciplines;" they are proactive in looking at new initiatives.[47] Good leaders not only possess vision; good leaders create vision. A leader must be able to envision and articulate the roles of library and librarians in this dynamic environment. Vision speaks to the perspective that leadership is not merely interchangeable with management; library leaders must be visionary to be effective and to help ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of libraries and other information organizations. Maureen Sullivan cites vision along with authenticity and confidence as one of the three most important competencies for library leaders. Effective leaders, she asserts, must have appreciative inquiry and must be able to inspire others and to work for others.[48] Losinski also connects vision in his definition of leadership, noting, "Leadership is establishing a vision and inspiring a group of people to obtain that vision."[49] Similarly, the Tufts Leadership Competencies model suggests that communicating a compelling vision is not merely inspiring and motivating others, but "allowing others to take the lead in achieving that vision."[50]

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Culturally Competent
- Exhibits an awareness of and appreciation for diverse cultures and beliefs
- Fosters an environment where all cultures are respected and valued

Accountability
- Instills trust in others and self
- Leads by example
- Assumes responsibility for decisions made

Team Building
- Effectively builds relationships inside and outside the organization
- Actively promotes and encourages strategic team-building
- Fosters a culture that values innovation/creativity

Development
- Actively seeks ways to grow people and develop staff
- Views development of staff as an integral part in the growth of the organization
- Provides opportunities for development through training and mentoring

Inspirational/Motivational
- Inspires individuals to succeed
- Motivates individuals to actively contribute to the organization
- Creates an environment of trust and integrity
- Builds and provides ongoing support for staff
- Encourages a developmental climate

Communication Skills
- Actively listens
- Effectively articulates ideas through verbal and written communication
- Able to give and receive constructive feedback
- Able to withhold judgment and not participate in gossip
- Encourages an environment of active communication

Interpersonal effectiveness includes six broad competencies describing leaders who can create a positive atmosphere centered on respect, responsibility, and motivation. Sherman identifies interpersonal effectiveness as a key factor for success, and notes "This skill includes the ability not only to communicate, listen, and facilitate conflict but also to 'be a visible presence for staff.' . . . Staff want to know that they can talk with their managers and feel that they are really being heard and known as individuals."[51] Excellent communication skills, accountability, cultural sensitivity, and effective team building are necessary for success. Jean Donham, college librarian at Warburg College (Iowa), notes, "You have to be able to articulate what you mean to all the constituencies that you are involved with—up and down."[52] McCauley and Hughes, in their identification of what incumbent human service administrators thought were the most important competencies of success in leadership positions, name three particular competencies related to the interpersonal effectiveness meta-competency: leading subordinates by "motivating subordinates, delegating to them, setting clear performance expectations;" setting a developmental climate by "encouraging growth, leading by example, providing challenge and opportunity;" and developing team orientation by "focusing on others to accomplish tasks, not being a loner."[53]

Karen Letarte, former director of ALA's Office for Diversity, and Wanda Brown, past-president of the Black Caucus of the ALA, both speak of the significance of insuring that all cultural identities are represented in this profession, as well as the responsibility that the field of librarianship holds in assuring that library leaders maintain their cultural identity as an asset to leadership devel-

opment. Cultural awareness is an essential function of any effective leader. Letarte recalls that her path to leadership, which began back in the early 1990s, unfortunately did not include programs like ALA's Spectrum Scholarship Program, which seeks to address the lack of diversity in librarianship by offering scholarships to individuals from underrepresented ethnic groups, because those programs simply did not exist. When Letarte saw no other individuals of color in the profession, her self-perception was greatly affected. She counts the confidence gained from seeing other individuals of color in leadership positions as a vital tool in growing successful leaders. There are culturally significant aspects to her leadership style reflecting leadership competencies that are vitally important to the profession as a whole. Those cultural attributes, some of which are tribally-oriented and reflective of her American Indian heritage are, as Brown asserts, similar in nature to the African American tradition and include a concern for the welfare of the group, community spirit, and the ability to gain wisdom from listening to others, particularly elders. Both Letarte and Brown found allies on their journey of discovering the leadership competencies that were instrumental in molding their leadership styles.[54]

MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS

Manage Change
- Able to build internal and external support for change
- Able to work with others to keep any transitions/changes running smoothly
- Demonstrates willingness to take calculated risks

Resource Management
- Demonstrates comprehension of cost efficiency and effectiveness
- Apportions and distributes resources equitably
- Able to teach others how to utilize resources in a proficient and useful manner
- Able to assign projects to colleagues and employees
- Acts with diligence and care

Strategic Planning
- Identifies clear, well-defined outcomes
- Exhibits short-term and long-term planning capabilities
- Able to drive results

Collaboration
- Able to build relationships with community groups and constituents
- Works with others where sharing resources would be appropriate

Flexibility/Adaptability
- Exhibits an open mind to new ideas
- Exhibits the ability to maintain a level head through difficult situations

The managerial effectiveness meta-competency includes the capacity to manage change, manage resources, plan for the future, collaborate with others, and have the ability to be flexible. This meta-competency focuses on effective and efficient ways to manage not only people, but also the organization as a whole, particularly in terms of change, strategic planning, and resource allocation. These competencies encompass the concrete managerial aspects of leadership, as well as the ability to work effectively and interact with others. Although leaders are not always in management positions, this competency applies to everyone, as it involves managing oneself effectively in addition to others and the organization. McCauley and Hughes, in their identification of what incumbent human service administrators thought were the most important competencies of success in leadership positions, report that acting with flexibility or "being able to behave in seemingly opposite ways, being tough and at the same time compassionate, leading and letting others lead," was at the top of their rank-ordered list of qualities identified by project respondents in their study.[55]

The literature search confirmed that there is a considerable difference between management competencies and leadership competencies. Lists of management competencies tend to be specific to particular types of jobs, while leadership competencies are broader and tend to apply across fields. Several library leaders interviewed by the team articulated the differences between leadership and management. Maureen Sullivan describes leadership as the act of guiding, empowering, and inspiring, noting she believes management is more about organizational function. Nevertheless, she asserts that in order to manage effectively, one must be an effective leader; therefore she often combines the two terms, referring to leadership in the workplace as "managerial leadership."[56] Todaro notes that the term *leadership* applies more to big-picture decisions, values, and motivations, while the term *management* applies more to operational duties and planning. Todaro points out, however, that although different, the terms are by no means mutually exclusive.[57] Molly Raphael, current president of LLAMA, said that managers and leaders have a different focus: managers look at the library's operations whereas leaders set the tone of the organization.[58]

Personal Attributes

When this leadership competency model was originally presented at the Emerging Leaders Poster Session at the 2008 ALA Annual Conference, the model included a fifth category: personal attributes. The project team members, however, debated among themselves about whether or not personal attributes are competencies, and how such attributes might fit in to a leadership competency model. The four meta-competencies are focused on behaviors that are instrumental in the delivery of desired results or outcomes—not on the attributes of individuals. Yet, personal

attributes appear in much of the literature, usually identified as attributes, behaviors, or traits. Hernon, Powell, and Young, for example, include a long list of individual traits in their findings from the interviews with library directors. These individual traits include: an appealing personality, common decency, an even temperament, good values/ethics, integrity, appreciation of people, and a sense of humor.[59] Sherman also uses a framework that includes personal characteristics.[60] Bartram, Robertson, and Callinan suggest that "a person's potential, or capability, to behave competently in the workplace is partly a function of their personal attributes."[61] Many of the models suggest that leaders do appear to share certain personal attributes and exhibit behaviors based on personal attributes that deeply affect the way in which they lead their organizations.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Principled / Ethical
- Practices principles above personalities
- Stands up for what he/she believes in
- Makes decisions without begin swayed by political expediency
- Considers the ethical implications of all personal actions and organizational activity

Honest
- Conducts conversations with others in a professional manner
- Addresses all issues—even sensitive issues—as they arise

Humble
- Gives credit to others as well as one's self when a task is completed
- Admits limitations and mistakes

Gracious
- Maintains a positive attitude in critical situations
- Mitigates gossip and other negative influences in the workplace
- Open and professional with others despite personal feelings
- Acknowledges when another does something positive or helpful for the institution

Teachable
- Identifies when assistance is needed and willing to ask for help
- Internalizes lessons learned from experiences for future use
- Accepts questions and input from others
- Influenced, but not manipulated, by others

From the literature, and from the personal experiences of the project team, five categories of personal attributes emerged: principled/ethical, honest, humble, gracious, and

teachable. There are many more characteristics, traits, and qualities that could be added to a list of personal attributes that contribute to good leadership. Without attributes such as these, it would be difficult to be as effective as another person who inherently possesses these attributes. Donham advocates for the inclusion of these attributes in the model. Good leaders are honest, direct, forthright, and must be "willing to be direct." Good leaders practice humility and ask for help. Good leaders are also principled: "You have to have principles and be driven by those principles. You have to have principles that guide your interactions with others."[62] Sullivan addresses honesty and integrity: "It is essential for leaders to be honest, to have personal integrity, and to be comfortable in their practice, comfortable being themselves."[63] Jim Mullins notes that a leader "must be honest, fair, and open."[64]

Conclusion

Prahalad and Hamel, in their seminal article "The Core Competence of the Corporation," observe, "We find it ironic that top management devotes so much attention to the capital budgeting process yet typically has no comparable mechanism for allocating the human skills that embody core competencies."[65] It is the core competencies of individuals, particularly those in leadership positions, which make the services libraries offer successful. Library leaders lacking some or many of these competencies will be unable to initiate, facilitate, and deliver successful services.

It should be noted that the use of competency lists or models is not a universally supported idea. Loriene Roy, former ALA president, observes that competencies are a way to benchmark abilities that are "good structurally," but are "small thinking."[66] Hollenbeck and McCall assert that a leadership competency model is a "best practice that defies logic, experience, and data" and the authors identify four underlying assumptions of leadership competency models that are problematic: (1) one set of characteristics can adequately describe what it means to be a successful leader; (2) each competency is independent of the others and an individual who has more of these competencies than another is a better leader; (3) because senior management develops and/or supports a competency model it must therefore be the correct way to view leadership; and (4) when human resources practices are based on competency models, these practices are effective.[67] However, Silzer, in his responses to Hollenbeck and McCall argues that

> competency models do not make the assumption that a single set of characteristics adequately describes effective leaders. Supporters of leadership competency models would not argue that competency models are 'the prescription' for effective leadership. They are simply an attempt to leverage the experience, lessons learned, and

knowledge of seasoned leaders for the benefit of others and the organization.

Further, competency models "are a useful attempt to help leaders learn a broader range of competencies and, in the process, learn how to use them differentially and effectively across different situations."[68] Bartram, Robertson, and Callinan believe that competencies can be a powerful tool for assessing performance; competencies give us a common language with which we can discuss leadership development and leadership issues.[69]

There is no expectation that any one person could ever possess all the competencies outlined here. However, the proposed model is intended to serve as a foundation for competencies a leader might possess, in an ideal situation, to be effective. These competencies are not mutually exclusive concepts, but are closely connected to one another. This model would no doubt benefit from continued revision; it is not a static document and it may change as the nature of the librarianship changes and progresses. That being said, each aspect of the list has been meticulously reviewed and revised. It is hoped that the development of a core competency model for library leaders will contribute to the mission of LLAMA and to the library profession as a whole.

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