

## **New Librarianship in Action: Applying the Framework to Foster Innovation in Academic Research Libraries**

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### **Abstract**

The publication of Lankes's *Atlas of New Librarianship* (2011) sparked a vibrant new movement in how to frame, fulfill, and communicate the timeless mission of libraries. "New Librarianship" holds that "The mission of librarians is to improve society by facilitating knowledge creation in their communities." This paper explores the major principles of the "New Librarianship" framework, and specifically considers how they can be applied in an academic research setting to foster library innovation and increase community engagement.

The Colorado School of Mines' Arthur Lakes Library is examined as a single case study for exploring and realizing the principles of "New Librarianship" within an academic setting. Over the past two years, the Arthur Lakes Library of the Colorado School of Mines has been able to rapidly transform by directly applying the principles of "New Librarianship" to a STEM-intensive research library. This qualitative case study examines the process of developing a new mission, vision, values, and strategic direction for an academic library based upon the "New Librarianship" framework. Challenges, successes, and emerging best practices from the ongoing experience are examined.

Many academic libraries still approach the practice of librarianship from the fairly traditional vantage point of collections and services. The "New Librarianship" framework provides a much-needed lexicon for understanding and conveying the truer, broader mission of libraries, as well as for guiding strategic library direction. The "New Librarianship" framework can serve as an impactful theoretical foundation for recasting and repositioning the role of the library within a university setting, and to accelerate academic library innovation.

This case study is limited to the specific application of the framework to a single academic environment. It is hoped that this study will motivate others to examine the potential of "New Librarianship" for fostering rapid academic library transformation on a broader scale.

Keywords: knowledge creation, strategic planning, mission statement

### **Introduction**

*"To be a librarian is not to be neutral, or passive, or waiting for a question. It is to be a radical positive change agent within your community"* (Lankes, 2013).

Librarianship Frameworks and Strategic Library Leadership

All library leaders require foundational, philosophical principles that guide them in their daily decision-making. For purposes of this paper, these principles are referred to as “frameworks”. For many current library deans and directors, the primary librarianship framework they learned during their library science studies was S. R. Ranganathan’s *Five Laws of Library Science*, introduced in 1931:

1. Books are for use.
2. Every person his or her book.
3. Every book its reader.
4. Save the time of the reader.
5. The library is a growing organism.

These five pithy statements contain many good, deep, and enduring principles and are still sound if the language is broadened to encompass new digital information resources. Ranganathan’s principles are limited, though, in that they present a deeply collection-centric and service-centric worldview of librarianship which is not particularly stirring. For the many librarians who were drawn to the field as a personal calling and who seek language to articulate and implement the higher values of the profession, Ranganathan’s laws fall short.

In 2011, R. David Lankes addressed this longstanding issue with the publication of his *Atlas of New Librarianship*:

I feel this field is in need of some inspiration. All too often we seem to reserve passionate and inspiring rhetoric for our political speeches and action movies. Why divorce the everyday struggles of a noble profession like librarians from soaring words? Are we not worthy of it (p. 4)?

Lankes’ bold new framework, introduced in the *Atlas*, provides an entirely refreshed, more expansive perspective on librarianship. “New Librarianship” recasts the mission of librarians in a way that effectively communicates librarianship as a calling and embraces the proactive aspects of our profession. He summarizes “New Librarianship” as follows:

The Mission of Librarians is to Improve Society through Facilitating Knowledge Creation in their Communities.

Each of the six major, interwoven principles of “New Librarianship”, referred to as “agreements” with “relationships” to each other, are underlined in this single, succinct statement:

1. **Mission:** Librarianship is not neutral; it has a proactive goal and purpose.
2. **Librarians:** The Mission is undertaken by Librarians, not by buildings or collections.
3. **Improve Society:** The Mission is to facilitate the betterment of Communities.
4. **Facilitating:** Librarians are not lofty, remote experts who serve up information to those needing it. They are fellow members *within* their Communities with a particular, shared role to play in the community’s Knowledge Creation aspirations.
5. **Knowledge Creation:** The mission is to seek and advance truth in order to Improve Society. Truth is a social, collectively held construct that is mutually developed via Community dialogue and participation (conversation theory).

6. **Communities:** Librarians don't serve "users" or "patrons". They facilitate the aspirations of their fellow Community "members". The aspirations of any given Community are unique and diverse. Community is central to New Librarianship; as Lankes (2015) notes, "The community is the true collection of any library, and the librarian's job is to unleash it."

*\*\*To better illustrate their application, these six principles will be referred throughout the remainder of this paper in their capitalized form (e.g., "Knowledge Creation").*

This new worldview of librarianship is not of library as place and space, or of library as collections and services, but of library as a community platform for knowledge exchange and development. This is not a mere rhetorical shift. It holds dramatic implications for how libraries organize themselves, present themselves, and interface with others. Libraries are not static warehouses of books and quiet places to study – they are proactive, collaborative, dynamic, transformational, and participatory.

A library, in its fullest sense, is mutual construct between members of a community. The library is ultimately not a physical building, but exists as a community platform to support learning, however that can be facilitated. Librarians are members of that community whose particular role is to facilitate that learning. Great libraries are therefore those that are not collection-centric or service-centric, but are knowledge- and community-centric.

For library leaders, the framework can provide a highly effective language for communicating and realizing the truer, broader, and timeless role of libraries. It conveys the essential *why* vs. just the *what* of librarianship. The framework also provides leaders with a powerful guide for decision-making on a daily and long-term basis. This case study examines how one academic library, the Arthur Lakes Library, has applied "New Librarianship" to guide its strategic direction.

## **Literature Review**

### Origins

Lankes' "New Librarianship" framework was formally introduced in 2011 with the publication of *The Atlas of New Librarianship*, but its developmental roots can be found in several earlier exploratory articles, including Lankes, Silverstein, and Nicholson (2007) which examines libraries as participants in conversation and concludes that "Impact and leadership, however, come from a firm and conceptual understanding of libraries' roles in their communities." Lankes (2008) further explored the ethical implications and appropriate boundaries of librarians as active participants in and shapers of community conversation, and the special responsibility of librarians to both recognize and disclose their inevitable biases during community engagement. Both of these seminal articles contain clearly recognizable components of the framework, but refer to it as "participatory librarianship".

### Theoretical applications

Shortly after the publication of the *Atlas* in 2011, Lankes (2012) introduced the principles of the framework to school librarians, arguing for a purpose-driven vs. a functional approach to the role of teacher librarians. In 2015, Osinski examined the potential implication of the "New Librarianship" model in the specific context of theological libraries, identifying the potential for

the framework to foster a more outward-facing, engaged theological library. Both of these examinations focused on the potential of “New Librarianship” to transform specific library environments, but were theoretical as opposed to being applied in scope.

Lankes followed up the *Atlas* with two further publications, *Expect More: Demanding Better Libraries for Today's Complex World* (2012) and *The New Librarianship Field Guide* (2016). Both are highly accessible treatments of the framework, intended to promote a broader understanding and more widespread adoption of the framework. *Expect More* is intended to be read by library stakeholders, to help them better understand, appreciate - and demand - a fuller manifestation of the mission of libraries in their communities. The *Field Guide* is written for practicing librarians, with practical tools and tips for putting the framework into action, and includes a short six-page chapter proposing five potential applications of “New Librarianship” in academic libraries. Both books share ample and inspiring examples of “New Librarianship” in action (whether or not the participants in the examples realized they were doing so).

Since the publication of *The Atlas*, several case studies have been published that examine strategies for transformational, community-centric change in academic libraries. Prokopčik and Krivienė (2013) cite several tenets of the “New Librarianship” framework in their literature review of academic library trends and examination of those holding specific application value for the Vilnius University Library. While considered in the context of a specific academic library setting, this too was a theoretical as opposed to an applied examination. In the notes of their case study on Rutgers University Libraries, Kranich, Lotts, and Springs (2014) cite the “New Librarianship” Framework as an additional resource for promoting community-library engagement, but instead focused on application of the joint American Library Association - Harwood Institute model (2019) to “turn outward”. While both of these case studies reference Lankes’ work, they did not specifically focus on “New Librarianship” as a chosen vehicle for accelerating academic library advancement. Lankes, Stephens, and Arjona (2015) applied the framework as a foundational starting point for exploring collaborative approaches between libraries and museums for aligned professional development. In doing so, they adapted and broadened the “New Librarianship” mission statement to include museums: “The mission of librarians and museum professionals is to foster conversations that improve society through knowledge exchange and social action”. More recently, Lankes (2017) argues for the formal adoption and incorporation of the principles of “New Librarianship” into library science, stating, “Library science must move onto a discipline based upon knowledge” (p. 9). These exercises, too, have been theoretical propositions vs. applied in nature.

Despite eight years having passed since the publication of *The Atlas*, a review of the literature yields no studies of the actual, intentional application of “New Librarianship” principles in library settings of any kind, nor the resulting impact any such undertakings may have had.

### **Purpose, Background, and Limitations of Case Study**

Given the lack of ground-level examples in the existing literature, this paper details the 2016-2019 experiences of the Arthur Lakes Library of the Colorado School of Mines in implementing the

principles of “New Librarianship” to rapidly update and transform a small, STEM-intensive academic research library.

### Background

The Colorado School of Mines (Mines), located in Golden, Colorado, USA, is a highly-ranked research university with an R2 Carnegie Classification and an international reputation for its rigorous engineering and applied sciences programs. As of Fall 2018, over 6,000 students from 50 states and 80 countries were enrolled in 70 undergraduate and graduate degree programs at the school.

The Arthur Lakes Library is the single library of the campus. Built in 1953 and last expanded in 1977 when the student population was just half its current size, the current library structure is undersized, technologically outmoded, and no longer effectively embodies, supports, or enhances the library’s mission or the innovative spirit of the Mines research community. The campus recognizes this and is planning for a complete physical renovation in the near future.

The physical condition of the Mines library somewhat reflected the overall state of the library encountered by the new University Librarian when she began her position in late 2016. The library’s collections were not adequately meeting the needs of faculty and students, the library was not fully engaging in digital and scholarly communication initiatives essential to modern academic libraries, and most importantly an early SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis determined that the Mines community no longer felt connected to the library. The ten library faculty and ten library staff members collectively identified the positioning of the library on the sidelines of the academic and research life of the campus as the primary and most pressing weakness that needed to be addressed. The University Librarian also oversees a world-class geology museum on campus, which had nonetheless been experiencing a similar dissociation from the curricular and research life of the campus.

### Purpose and Limitations

Over the past two and one-half years, the Arthur Lakes Library of the Colorado School of Mines has been addressing these challenges and rapidly reinventing itself by directly and intensively applying the principles of “New Librarianship” to its STEM research library setting. This qualitative case study examines the process of developing and implementing a new mission, vision, values, and strategic direction for an academic library based directly upon the “New Librarianship” framework. Challenges, successes, and emerging best practices from this ongoing experience are also shared. It is hoped that this study will encourage others to conduct action research to explore, in a working environment, “New Librarianship” as a potent catalyst for fostering rapid academic library transformation on a broad scale.

As a single case study of a small and fairly unique type of academic library, though, it is uncertain how readily the case study presented herein can be replicated across other academic library environments.

## Discussion

### Setting Course: Strategic Planning and Visioning Process

In November 2016, the Arthur Lakes Library welcomed a new University Librarian who is a devoted adherent of the “New Librarianship” framework and who brought with her a recent experience successfully applying its principles to a small, very rural, public university library. After a short period of acclimation, she led the library and the broader campus community in an intensive, 12-week strategic visioning and planning process to better align the Library’s mission, services, space, and collections with that of the Colorado School of Mines.

The process included a series of eight lunchtime conversations open to the entire campus and regional community, centered around the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) *Institute-Wide Task Force on the Future of Libraries Preliminary Report* (2016). Each session included a brief presentation on one of the reports key recommendations, followed by an open discussion of the recommendation to solicit input from faculty, staff, student, and community regarding the Library’s strategic direction and renovation plans. This exercise both informed the strategic planning process, which took place concurrently, as well as fostered dialogue with critical stakeholders of the library’s developing ambitions. A summary of each conversation, with key takeaways was then shared with the full community via a library blog. This series of conversations drew directly from the core of “New Librarianship”, participatory principles that Knowledge Creation takes place through Community Conversation, and that the Community is comprised of full-fledged members of the library. The library thus not only applied “New Librarianship” principles to the conversation itself through that conversation, but was also able to share with the community a fresh new way of conceptualizing and participating in *their* library.

Concurrently with this two-month series of conversations, the University Librarian led the full library and museum staff in weekly strategic planning process. The first week involved an introduction and group discussion of the principles of “New Librarianship”. Following this, the library engaged in a multi-week group SWOT analysis to identify the library’s primary strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. A clear and unequivocal consensus emerged that the library and museum’s primary weakness and threat was one and the same: An insufficient integration with the curricular and research endeavors of the campus. “Isolation” was a term that occurred frequently during this early phase.

By this point in the process, a healthy amount of stakeholder feedback had emerged from the lunchtime Community discussions. We had developed a better understanding of their Knowledge Creation needs and interests. The staff next took on a collaborative effort to review the library’s existing mission statement in light of strategic input gathered up to that point.

The library’s existing mission statement at that time was:

*The Arthur Lakes Library develops innovative services and facilities, provides access to and preserves knowledge, and enhances the learning, teaching, and research at the Colorado School of Mines.*

The new mission statement developed by the library faculty and staff is now:

*We foster a rich and responsive information environment that empowers learning, discovery, critical thinking, and knowledge creation for Mines and a sustainable global society.*

The influence of “New Librarianship” tenets upon this new statement is unmistakable. The Mission of the Library had transformed from a relatively traditional emphasis on services and collections to the crafting of a dynamic milieu where the Community can connect with information and each other in order to Create new Knowledge. The phrase “Arthur Lakes Library” was replaced with “We”, to underscore the New Librarianship principle that it is people (Librarians), not buildings (Library) who Facilitate the Mission.

The library had not previously established any formal vision and value statements. Following the updating of mission statement, the library faculty and staff took that on. The aspirational vision of the library is now:

To be “The collaborative partner and intellectual nexus that bridges disciplines and communities across the Mines campus.”

And after considerable reflection, the library’s values were agreed to be:



The influence of “New Librarianship” can be readily recognized in both this new vision and statement of values. The vision emphasizes Librarians as fellow collaborators in the Community’s aspirations. The values likewise collectively emphasize a sense of belonging for Community members and Facilitating of Knowledge Creation by Librarians.

The library’s newly created mission, vision, and values statements were broadly shared with the community for feedback before finalizing them. They were then promoted through both the library’s website and large eye-catching posters hung in all library stairwells. Whenever possible,

the University Librarian incorporates expression of the mission, vision, and values into staff and campus events, as both an opportunity for the library faculty and staff to themselves embrace and internalize them and to promote them to the greater community. Words matter and can serve as powerful vehicles for rapid institutional transformation; by revisiting them regularly, they can serve as an active guide for decision-making, and for positive organizational culture shifts.

Finally, with mission, vision, values, SWOT, and stakeholder input in hand, the library and museum staff took on the creation of a three-year ambitious but achievable strategic plan that was aligned with the university's broader strategic plan as well as the particular aspirations expressed by the library's community members. Weekly group and individual exercises to contribute to the plan's development included brainstorming sessions, literature review assignments to identify emerging library trends, and special consideration of physical library renovation goals. The resulting 2017-2020 plan may be viewed at [mines.edu/library/strategic/](https://mines.edu/library/strategic/).

This entire planning process was conducted in close conjunction with the geology museum. Consequently, multiple innovative opportunities for partnership and collaboration between the library and museum were identified. In this manner, all constituents found themselves organically implementing aspects of the Salzburg Curriculum for the library-museum collaborations espoused by Lankes et. al (2015) which was based upon an expanded view of "New Librarianship".

Since the planning process was highly participatory, engaging, and concentrated in terms of time, the library and museum faculty and staff developed a new, heightened sense of the value and potential of their daily work. A renewed sense of camaraderie and enthusiasm was developed as a direct result of the planning process. They recognized that the outcomes of the 12-week intensive planning process would guide the Arthur Lakes Library and Mines Geology Museum as they continued to engage with stakeholders to collaboratively shape a modern academic library and museum that are fully integrated and engaged with, supported by, and meeting the needs and aspirations of its community. They also developed the personal lexicon needed to effectively communicate this new vision to others in their daily interactions, and felt empowered to do so. The word began to spread that the Arthur Lakes Library was a destination to freely engage in community learning, experimentation, and information discovery. The library team was well on its way.

#### Setting Sail: Initial Years of New Librarianship in Action

To translate the new mission, vision, and values statements into prioritized actions, the Arthur Lakes Library faculty and staff identified seven high-level goals to move the library forward in pursuit of the community's aspirations:

1. Enhance the user experience.
2. Cultivate and strengthen information competencies.
3. Dynamically respond to users' resource needs.
4. Expand outreach and engagement.
5. Become the campus nexus for scholarly communication.
6. Commit to career development for all library staff.
7. Formalize library development.

It would be far too lengthy to identify all the many accomplishments of the past two years since the plan was officially implemented (July 2017). This section instead identifies just one or two representative accomplishments for each of these seven goals, with a specific reference to how these achievements directly correlate to the library's application of the "New Librarianship" model:

- 1. Enhance the user experience.** This expansive high-level goal includes responsive improvements to access services, research services, and both physical and digital environments. In addition to debuting an entirely fresh, far more engaging website on a new content management system platform, the library has consolidated its reference, instruction, engagement, and scholarly communication functions into a newly renovated area of the library dubbed the "Scholars Hub". It is a highly visible and attractive destination for faculty and student consultations on the library's most public-facing services. By physically collocating these roles, which were previously dispersed throughout various corners of the library, the Community is more readily able to see and understand the essential part that Librarians play in collaboratively Facilitating their Knowledge Creation aspirations. It has already become a popular campus destination, even before the finishing touches have been put on it.
- 2. Cultivate and strengthen information competencies.** In close collaboration with faculty and students, the library developed two series of information literacy workshops. One workshop targeted undergraduates ("Emerging Scholars Seminar Series") and the other focused on graduates ("Graduate Student Workshops"). Topics as diverse as Latex authoring, citation management, and Software Carpentry have been offered. The series has proven to be so popular that registration is now required for some sessions that characteristically "sell out" within a day or less. The success of the program can be directly attributed to the Librarians' commitment to seeking out and being responsive to (Facilitating) the expressed Knowledge Creation aspirations of the Mines Community. We have made similar strides in more fully integrating and scaffolding information literacy instruction within the Mines' curriculum.
- 3. Dynamically respond to users' resource needs.** Through our Spring 2017 campus conversations, librarians learned the degree to which the library's collections were no longer adequately meeting the needs of the community. The library's Head of Collection Management Services applied conversation theory to this identified weakness, leading a series of open discussions with faculty, staff, and students, and creating a web guide to Facilitate more transparent communication (<http://libguides.mines.edu/librarybudget>). The library's collections became a Community conversation, and the Community was encouraged to actively participate in resource decisions. This "membership"-driven approach has led to a much stronger and more relevant collection, as well as greater fiscal support for future collection development.
- 4. Expand outreach and engagement.** The library created a new position of Engagement & Outreach Librarian, dedicated to increasing the amount and variety of library programming. The library accomplished this without having to advocate for an additional funded position line by converting a retired staff position to the new librarian role. Thanks to this dedicated role, the library now offers a broad range of weekly programming events, including lectures, book discussions, concerts, robust exhibits, and much more. Mines is a highly rigorous

institution, and students were clearly communicating their interest in programs that could assist with stress management. As a direct result, the library also now provides popular weekly sessions in: meditation, stress counseling, and therapy dog treatment. Thanks to lively posters and social media engagement, the library is widely recognized as a community platform and gathering place. International graduate students in particular have expressed a greater need for a sense of community and leisure reading opportunities in their native languages. In response to their needs, the library established what is believed to be the first and only Little Free Arabic Library in the United States. Additional Little Free Libraries for Chinese-speaking and other international students are currently under development. This is all “New Librarianship” in action. If something Improves Society and Facilitates Knowledge Creation – and this includes leisurely, fun activities, then Librarians have a role to play.

5. **Become the campus nexus for scholarly communication.** Scholarly communication is a focus area for many academic libraries, and a critical one for effectively embedding librarians within the research community. Librarians at Arthur Lakes recognized the importance of growing this new role carefully and intentionally if they were to be fully effective in the long run. After two years of careful, steady relationship building across campus, the Scholarly Communications Librarian is now rapidly deploying signature initiatives in the areas of open education resources (OER), open access (OA), research data management (RDM), research information management systems (RIMS), and more. It is an exciting time, and one that was only made possible via long-term efforts to spark a Community conversation about how Librarians can most effectively support the full research lifecycle – and therefore Knowledge Creation - at Mines.
6. **Commit to career development for all library staff.** This strategic goal explicitly recognizes that library faculty and staff are fellow members of the Community and can only fully realize the Mission of “New Librarianship” if they themselves can first enhance their own individual potential to Facilitate Knowledge Creation. To jumpstart this, the library embarked on a fairly free “spree” period of supported travel for professional development. This investment has paid off. Upon their return from conferences and workshops, each library faculty and staff member shares major learning points. In addition, they have developed a collective understanding that anyone who returns with one or two implementable ideas is generating a positive return on investment. Mines has developed an increasingly global outlook, and the Librarians have correspondingly sought out opportunities for international professional development. They have done so because, as fellow members of the Community, Librarians must be active and present wherever its Community Knowledge Creation aspirations are heading. After two years of extensive travel, the library will now be necessarily returning to a more budget-oriented approach to professional development, while still sustaining a strong commitment to ongoing professional learning and scholarship.
7. **Formalize library development.** Through extensive campus dialogue, the library was able to successfully advocate for the expansion of a planned \$2.8 million partial library renovation into a planned \$13 million full library renovation. The library’s new mission, vision, values, and strategic plan, developed through an extensive campus conversation which can be directly attributed to this positive development. The library is now beginning its fundraising efforts by recording video testimonials from Community members as to the library’s Knowledge

Creation impact on their lives. The testimonials acquired thus far are inspiring, stirring, and best of all, provide a direct voice for the Community to engage in and Facilitate the library renovation process.

## **Findings: Success and Challenges**

### Success

The aforementioned representative accomplishments are a clear testament to how a “New Librarianship” framework can serve as a theoretical foundation for reframing and repositioning the role of the library within a university setting, as well as accelerating academic library innovation and impact. Just two years in to the new strategic plan, the Arthur Lakes library faculty and staff all agree that what was once the library’s most pressing and concerning weakness – the sidelining of the library in the research and curricular life of the campus – is no longer a concern. They are actively engaging with faculty and students on a daily basis, the library has become a dynamic, lively community hub, and they are excited about the launch of so many carefully prepared scholarly communications initiatives. The library faculty and staff are justifiably proud of the creation-centric library they are crafting on a daily basis. Additional benefits yielded from the “New Librarianship” approach to library leadership have included a closer sense of teamwork and a far more user-centered perspective on daily activities.

### Challenges

This is not to suggest that the process has been without attending challenges or even outright failures. The new strategic plan necessitated organizational restructuring, as well as an enhanced sense of flexibility and adventure on the part of library faculty and staff. Not all have as readily embraced the rapid implementation of an entirely new paradigm, and this resulted in some departures. Searches for replacement library faculty and staff are time-consuming, and can drain valuable time from strategic initiatives. Yet, they are also remarkable opportunities to accrue new skill sets and strengthen the overall team.

The vast majority of the campus community has embraced and is contributing actively to the new library vision, but some common barriers will always endure. One of the greatest challenges librarians face in their efforts to transform modern academic libraries is overcoming longstanding, entrenched, and affectionately embraced stereotypes of what a library is. They will always have to work in overcoming notions of libraries as quiet places filled with books and shushing librarians with gray hair in a bun and pince-nez glasses. Those days - if they ever existed - are long over, but it requires continuous effort to overcome these outmoded but deeply held concepts by some members of the community. This in turn requires persistence, patience, and resilience. The “New Librarianship” framework provides librarians with the essential language needed to take on this perennial issue.

Finally, it should be noted that the “New Librarianship” framework has a way of creating a virtuous cycle that can quickly become tyrannical in the face of resource constraints. Once a community discovers the true role of libraries and their membership (or even ownership) in that role, they will bring their own ideas and enthusiasm to the table. This is when conversation theory really kicks

in, and the librarians' facilitated conversation starters evolve into a true two-way dialogue. This is the "power of Yes", and a great way to create "library magic". It is also a recipe for overstretched librarians if additional supporting resources cannot be brought to bear quickly enough to support new and expanding initiatives. This is perhaps a "happy dilemma", but also a very real one that can lead to staff burnout and departures if not carefully minded by a library leader.

### **Conclusions: Best Practices, Practical Applications, and Recommendations**

It is hoped that this case study in specific applications of "New Librarianship" to an academic environment will motivate others to examine its potential for fostering rapid library advancement. For academic library leaders interested in exploring the power of the "New Librarianship" framework to transform the practice of librarianship from the fairly traditional vantage point of collections and services to that of a creation-centric community platform, this model will provide a much-needed lexicon for understanding and conveying the truer, broader mission of libraries, as well as guiding strategic library direction and innovation.

The experiences of the Arthur Lakes Library described herein are ongoing and far from perfect or ideal in their execution, but offer some emerging best practices and recommendations for library leaders to consider. These include:

1. Library leaders must **Pace** themselves, and judge the pace that will work best for the community. Not all library transformations need to be introduced rapidly.
2. As library administration pace themselves, they must pay mind to the **workload** of their team.
3. A sustained community conversation is highly rewarding, but also time-consuming. The library must be prepared to invest significant **time**, both initially and over the long term
4. To avoid disconnects between strategic initiatives and the resources to support them, engage in continuous dialogue with **decision-makers** such as administrators, faculty senators, trustees, and donors. A transformative library leader must also be a politician, and these especially influential members of the library community are not to be ignored, at the risk of failure.
5. "New Librarianship" is fun, but not necessarily geared toward the highly linear individual. Be prepared for the unexpected. Being **responsive and flexible** to community interests sometimes entails a quick change of plans, or the occasional day when multiple concurrent events tax even the best of multitaskers.
6. As powerful as the magic of Yes may be when combined with the power of "New Librarianship", the effective library leader must also know when to **say no** in the face of a surfeit of opportunities.
7. Maintain an **open-door** policy, not just for library faculty and staff, but for all community members. "New Librarianship" thrives on the continuous ideas and input of community members. Once they know their input is welcomed and valued, the ideas will flow.
8. As David Lankes once stated at a conference, "**Be the change, don't document it.**" Library leaders *do* want to assess impact, as a demonstrable return on investment is essential for garnering institutional support. However, when faced with an opportunity cost, it is important to always opt in favor of doing instead of recording. Dynamic, creation-centric libraries require constant attention.
9. Active facilitators of community aspirations, must develop a heightened awareness of personal biases. It is essential to engage in **self-reflection** to ensure an appropriate balance between

facilitating community conversation and actively steering it as a fellow member of the community.

10. Library leaders must remember to **celebrate accomplishments** along the way. There will be many of them!

It can perhaps be suggested that these best practices apply to any library leadership setting, or even to any organizational environment. In the aforementioned experiences of the Arthur Lakes Library, the particularly dynamic environment brought about by the intentional application of “New Librarianship” requires special attention to these best leadership practices.

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