



## Developing Your Leadership Potential: Some Current Opportunities

**Michele M. Reid**  
Dean of Libraries  
North Dakota State University

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“Knowledge is like a garden. If it is not cultivated it cannot grow.”

*African proverb cited during the HERS 2005 Summer Institute*

How does the aspiring leader grow in the knowledge she needs to cultivate her leadership talents? This afternoon I want to talk to you for a few minutes about some of the opportunities for leadership development in higher education and librarianship that I’ve participated in, and then open the floor for your thoughts and discussion on the topic.

My examples of academic leadership development include:

- Higher education leadership through the HERS programs (HERS America and its sister program in South Africa)
- for new librarians, the American Library Association NMRT Mentoring pilot
- for new college library directors: the Association of College and Research Libraries’ CLS Section New Directors Mentor Program

### ***Higher Education Leadership Development Opportunities: HERS and HERS South Africa***

In the summer of 2005, I was privileged to participate with over 80 higher education colleagues from the United States and abroad in the HERS/Bryn Mawr Summer Institute, a month-long, residential program located at Bryn Mawr College, a private women’s liberal arts institution located near Philadelphia in Pennsylvania that’s distinguished

alumnae include the poet Marianne Moore, biologist and geneticist Nettie Maria Stevens, and actress Katherine Hepburn.

### HERS History and Mission

HERS (Higher Education Resource Services) was founded in 1972 to provide leadership and management development for women faculty and administrators. Since that time, over 3,000 women leaders have attended HERS programs.

The Summer Institute began in 1976 as a joint project of HERS and Bryn Mawr College, with initial funding from the William H. Donner Foundation, and a goal “to improve the status of women in middle to executive levels of higher education administration, where women have been and still are traditionally under-represented.”

### HERS Curriculum

The curriculum focuses on current issues in higher education, with an emphasis on management in a climate of growing diversity. Designed for women “who are actively seeking increased administrative responsibilities,” its goals are to teach participants:

- **knowledge and skills** in higher education governance and management (including policy formulation, long range planning and decision making, accounting and budgeting, and information technology trends)
- **institutional perspectives** on current issues and problems in higher education
- **specific strategies** to enhance career planning and professional development for women
- and how to **build networks** of peers and mentors.

In the course of the program, participants will gain a comprehensive view of higher education trends, as well as of aspects of their own institutions outside their divisions that they may not have been aware of. For example, many faculty participants I talked with while at Bryn Mawr indicated that—before interviewing their university Presidents and Vice Presidents as one of the pre-institute assignments—they had been unaware of many operational aspects of their institutions outside of academic affairs (for example, the finance and student sides of higher education administration).

Themes of the curriculum include:

- “Strategic Vision” (including “charting and achieving institutional priorities,” discerning trends, and planning, including how to gain the support of various constituencies).
- “Resource Management” (not only budgeting and financial analysis, but also personnel recruitment and retention, and working with institutional advancement in lobbying and fundraising efforts).
- “Organizational Skills” (including collaborative decision-making strategies, conflict management, and leading in an increasingly global environment).

- “Institutional Impact” (including utilizing best practices models, advancement, and drawing on the HERS support network to address leadership challenges).

### HERS Most Interesting Features

I found the two most useful program features to be its aim of creating a “stimulating environment in which to identify and energize career goals,” and its opportunities for developing a “mutually supportive” network of other talented women from all types and sizes of academic institutions. Participants have come from across the US, Canada, Bermuda, the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, South Africa, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Iran and a number of other countries. Alumnae hold positions of leadership in higher education and include chancellors, presidents, vice presidents and deans. I went to HERS as the library director and CIO of a small liberal arts college of under 2,500 students in northern Maryland. The HERS networking experience contributed to my own recent move up to a deanship at a public university of nearly 13,000 students.

### Practicalities

If you are to apply to the HERS Summer Institute, be aware:

- ♦ That most Summer Institute participant attendance is supported financially in full or in part by the participants’ own institutions. So start early to garner support on your campus and contact HERS for suggestions. (Current costs are approximately \$7,400, plus travel.)

I can provide you with their website and email contact information:

<http://hersnet.org>

Judith White, President and Executive Director (jwhite28@du.edu)

- ♦ It is an intensive program requiring a full month-long commitment during the summer—even weekends offer the possibility of homework—but it does enable you to build networking relationships that will continue throughout your professional career.
- ♦ Also, you have to stay in the student residence halls, with all the attendant joys and headaches of a communal atmosphere (no private baths, for example). For participants who had not experienced residence hall living since they were undergraduates, this took some getting used to.

If you are unable to make a continuous month-long commitment, for those who can travel to Massachusetts or Denver (admittedly, not convenient for most international participants), there are two other HERS institute models:

- ♦ The HERS Institute at Wellesley College in Massachusetts conducts a series of five weekend seminars from October through April also offering the material covered in the summer institute. It is limited to 50 women. (Contact Susan Knowles, Assistant Director, sknowles@wellesley.edu.)

- ◆ The University of Denver in Colorado holds a series of 4 seminar sessions from August through November limited to 40 women. (Contact Judith White, above.)

### HERS in South Africa

The HERS South Africa Program, that my colleague Fatima Darries talked about last year during the discussion group meeting in Durban, was started in 2000 as a mentoring opportunity for African women to travel to Wellesley College to receive HERS training and to observe the administrative practices at U.S. colleges and universities firsthand. In 2003, a HERS sister site was launched in Cape Town that now sponsors one and two-day workshops on university campuses across South Africa. Its featured program is the one-week autumn Academy, attracting 85 women from campuses across South Africa, Ghana, Zambia, Namibia, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda. Since 2003, through funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, a small number of HERS-South Africa Academy graduates have also been selected yearly to participate in the HERS Bryn Mawr Summer Institute. Fatima was one of those selected in 2005. This program is an excellent example of the “lifting as we climb” philosophy she talked about last year.

If you are a colleague from Africa, I urge you to contact Fatima or one of the HERS-SA Board to see how you can become active in this organization and find out how to apply for the Bryn Mawr program.

The website is: <http://www.hers-sa.org.za>.

### HERS Opportunities and Future Direction

Again, one of the biggest strengths of the HERS programs is the opportunity for networking. HERS alumnae keep in touch through a database of Institute faculty and alumnae accessed on the HERS website, through class listservs, and through reunions in conjunction with professional meetings and conferences. We also rely on email and other personal contacts. The programs, both in America and in South Africa, are especially good for librarians who aspire to larger roles on their campuses and in the profession, and they allow you to establish connections outside your field. In addition to priming you for leadership, the curriculum will also provide you with an overview and some of the technical language of all aspects of academic administration.

When I talked with Judith White, the HERS Executive Director, recently, she was excited about this IFLA session raising awareness of these programs and wanted me to convey her best wishes to all participants here today. HERS is currently undergoing a strategic planning process and entertaining ideas for possible new directions and services, especially in increasing international participation.

I now want to move from this example of a general higher education leadership development program to two of those for the library profession.

### ***For New Librarians: American Library Association New Member Round Table's Career Mentoring Program***

This is a new pilot program just completing its second year. It was designed by a section of the American Library Association specifically for new librarians, pairing them with veterans who can provide them with support during their first few years in the profession. While not exclusively a leadership development program, it strongly encourages new members to be active professionally and to take on leadership roles in national and state organizations. Much of the mentoring involves advising on management and staff issues, developing a career path, and determining with the protégée plans for further education or additional service. For academic librarians, this can involve serving as a sounding board as the protégée considers promotion and tenure issues and deals with organizational politics.

The program's advertising provides a good description of some desirable traits of a mentor: "Have you been a librarian for 5 years or more? Do you have a handle on all those professional questions that come up from day to day? Do you find yourself wishing that someone would have been there to teach you all that you now know? Do you find yourself wondering to whom you can impart all this hard-fought knowledge?"

It has been professionally rewarding for me to serve in this program as a mentor. My protégée during the last academic year has been in the field for some time but finished her library degree fairly recently. It was a pleasure communicating with her frequently by phone and email, providing advice regarding her c.v., career planning, etc. I also wanted her to have an early experience of co-authoring a publication, which I hope will prove valuable to her as she seeks to advance her career, and we are working on an article together on "distance mentoring" from both the protégée's and mentor's standpoints. Although our year together was officially over in July, we are maintaining our relationship and hope to meet in person at the ACRL Conference next year in Seattle.

If you need more information about this program (which is open to all American Library Association members), see: <http://www.ala.org/ala/nmrt/comm/careerpilot.cfm>.

Targeting those who have been in a professional position for 6 months to 5 years, this program is designed for people fairly new to the profession. My next example, from the College Libraries Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), is designed for those with more experience who are taking on the directorship of a college library for the first time.

### ***College Library Directors Mentor Program***

#### **Background**

The program arose over twenty years ago out of the need to "enhance leadership capabilities of new college library directors and to help them meet the challenges involved in directing libraries in small colleges." Almost 200 librarians have participated

in the program since its inception. First-year directors are paired with experienced mentors within the same geographical region. The venerable Larry Hardesty has been the program director since its inception, with the College Library Section's Leadership Committee also assisting with planning and implementation. (For more history, see Larry Hardesty, "College Library Directors Mentor Program: 'Passing It On:' A Personal Reflection," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 23 (July 1997): 281-290.) I initially took part as a new director in 2000-2001, and have remained connected with my fellow participants ever since.

### Components

There are three major program components:

- ◆ First, a first-year director is matched with an experienced peer. This is to provide “the first-year director with an experienced ‘listener’ who wants to ‘help’ but not ‘tell.’” They are to visit each other's facility at least once, meaning ideally that they live within a three or four hour drive of one another. The emphasis is on developing a “confidential relationship.”
- ◆ Second, a three-day seminar is held just prior to the American Library Association Midwinter Conference, with topics chosen to reflect the kinds of challenges participants face in a small college environment. The seminar shares a major focus with the HERS programs in creating a participant network members can utilize throughout their professional careers. On a personal note, the group is a close one. And, although I have not seen my “official” mentor again for some time, my original roommate from our seminar in 2000 and I still room together at American Library Association Conferences. There are regular “reunions,” usually in bars where large quantities of alcohol may be consumed by some (but not by this participant), and ongoing opportunities for conversations via phone and email.
- ◆ Third, each new participant becomes part of a closed web discussion group, where participants solicit opinions on both practical operational matters as well as more philosophical issues.

The number of participants accepted into the program averages about fifteen per year. Because institutions are expected to cover the modest costs of the program, (now approximately \$600 plus some additional travel costs), an announcement is circulated on the Council of Independent Colleges listserv soliciting chief academic officer support for their new directors. I had my provost's full support while I participated in the program, and it is rare when a new director who is interested in the program cannot secure funding from his or her college. Because it is based largely on geographical proximity (for example, my assigned mentor was an hour away), and emphasizes face-to-face meetings, the program is limited to US and Canadian participants. But, especially as the peers you encounter remain part of your network for years to come, the program would serve as a valuable model for similar ventures in other countries. (For more information, see

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/aboutacrl/acrlsections/collegelibraries/collprogdisc/collegelibrary.cfm#What>).

## Conclusion

**And gladly would [s]he learn, and gladly teach.**

*Chaucer*

I've talked about some of my experiences with leadership development programs (both in higher education generally and those intended specifically for librarianship). There are, of course, many other examples of successful programs, and I'll mention just a few here:

- General library leadership: Library Administration and Management Association (LAMA) launched a ten month formal mentoring program at the 2008 ALA Annual Conference.
- Academic library leadership: The Women's Leadership Institute, a four-day workshop to be held this winter in Florida, is sponsored by ACRL and six other higher education associations, and designed for library directors and senior managers. (<http://www.acrl.org/ala/acrl/acrlvents/womensleadership.cfm>).
- Academic library leadership: The Frye Leadership Institute, a two-week intensive workshop held yearly at Emory University in Georgia, is intended "for those in higher education who aspire to more significant leadership roles, including disciplinary faculty, librarians, information technology professionals, and administrators." (<http://www.fryeinstitute.org>).
- Academic library leadership: The Harvard Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians, a week-long residential workshop at Harvard University in Massachusetts, is limited to "those with significant administrative responsibility in an institution of higher education, and who show high promise for making a significant contribution in the future." Applications are on a "first-come, first-served basis." (<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/ppe/highered/programs/acrl.html>).
- Librarians of color: The ACRL Dr. E. J. Josey Spectrum Scholar Mentor Program, begun in 2007, brings "library school students and newly graduated librarians of color together with established academic librarians for mentoring, coaching, role modeling, career guidance and opportunities for leadership in the profession." (<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlproftools/mentorprogram.cfm>).
- Information literacy instruction: The ACRL Instruction Section Mentoring Program also debuted after the ALA Annual Conference this summer, pairing experienced academic librarians with those new to instruction and interested in enhancing their teaching skills. According to the ACRL website, participation is primarily virtual, although there will be opportunities to meet in person at ALA Annual and Midwinter conferences. The program also emphasizes networking and idea exchange with other participants. (<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrlbucket/is/iscomittees/webpages/mentoring>).

- And, of course, check with your state, province or regional associations for additional leadership institute development opportunities.

### **Discussion Questions**

And now I'll throw out some questions that we may be able to use as a springboard for discussion:

What programs have you participated in?

What other programs out there are "best of breed" for you?

What other kinds of development opportunities would you like to see?

Are you interested in leadership pairings through this new IFLA discussion group's mentoring program?

What amount of support can you receive for such leadership development from your institution/professional organizations/funding agencies, etc.?