
The Chapter awarded two attendance scholarships to the fall conference. In return, first time attendee scholarship winner Corey Johnson (left) and student scholarship winner Leslie Hurst (right) report on conference activities below.

Fundamental Questions and Answers
by Corey Johnson

“What did you do?” This was the question posed to me by my colleague early Monday morning. First I said, “A lot” as a convenient placeholder, and then more reflectively added, “We thought about the important things.” This prompted a bit of a puzzled look from my colleague who asked me another question wondering if by “important things” I meant how to best incorporate the ACRL Information Literacy Standards into library instruction or how librarians should organize against the USA Patriot Act? I told him that we spoke, heard, and thought more about the “whys” than the “whats,” more about the foundations and frameworks of our profession than about specific policies or programs. Our speakers often directly, and sometimes indirectly, challenged us to grapple with fundamental questions and consider potential answers. We were asked to transcend the conventional definitions and boundaries of librarianship. And how will we do this? We can start by being more mindful than ever about the perspectives of our users. Do we have a vision for the future? We were advised to be clear about areas where we will compromise and those where we won’t. Prioritization will be key in these continuing times of decreased public funds. How will we coalesce internal transitions with the rapid and external changes around us? We will need to embrace less distinct job roles while thinking more about the values that drive our institutions.

We were inspired to ask ourselves if the students, faculty, and staff on our campuses really know what we do? We need to tell our stories across campus. We were prompted to query ourselves about connections with administrators and to seek successful collaborative relationships with faculty members as a way to gain the attention and favor of administrators. We were asked to write down one thing we could do to create the greatest positive impact at our institutions and one action we could take tomorrow to move toward the change we desire. Many spoke of enhanced partnering with faculty members like participating in department meetings and team teaching courses.
Some of the less serious conference activities.

We were asked to ponder what we were glad about in our profession. Answers to this question ranged from excitement about the quick pace of change in librarianship to the freedom to generate one’s own professional objectives. What was a quintessential moment for you as a librarian? Everyone who volunteered comments expressed satisfying experiences in helping patrons meet their needs.

Questions about the promotion of our libraries filled the final sessions of the conference. We contemplated how we wanted our patrons to understand us and what we wanted to be known for. Numerous ideas were described to aid in creating demand for our resources, everything from the development of a logo and tagline for a digital reference service to library sponsored sports trivia at the home football games.

The conference offered the time and speaker guided leadership to think about many fundamental questions. Now we begin the creative process of incorporating new ideas and strategies into our work.

Conference Reflections
by Leslie Hurst

The clouds hid Mount Rainier as we approached the Pack Forest Conference Center late in the morning of October 23rd. However, once we arrived they seemed to break up after a quick sprinkle to brighten up the place with blue sky and sunshine. My colleague and I arrived earlier than anticipated, and were excited to get first pick of the beds (indoor bathrooms, woohoo!) and have some time to walk around and check out the place.

Once most of the group arrived and were fed lunch in the Dining Hall, we all convened in Scott Hall for the days’ events to begin. ACRL Washington President Linda Pierce began our talks with a quick welcome before she brought Nancy Huling up to introduce the keynote speaker, Chris D. Ferguson, Dean for Information Resources and Pacific Lutheran University.