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Leadership in the Library/Information Profession

Robert V. Williams
University of South Carolina - Columbia, bobwill@sc.edu

defining who we are. But, oh, how boring! Mr. Bennett's book could have been condensed into ten pages. Since I read this work over a period of four or five nights, I found this book to be a definitive cure for insomnia—it beats Sominex. ■

Larry Chasen
Manager, Information Center
General Electric Co., Astro/Space Division
Philadelphia, PA
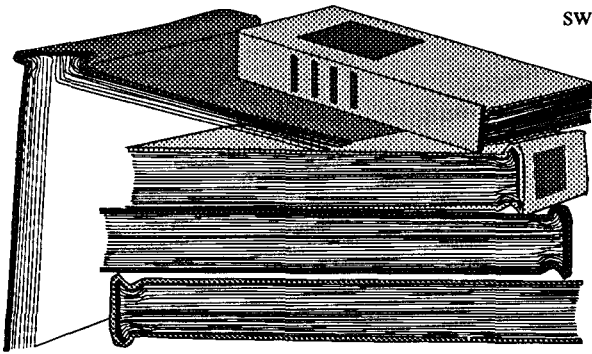
Leadership In the Library/Information Profession, edited by Alice Gertzog. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 1989, ISBN 0-89950-426-4 (paper). 84 pp.

This small volume is good proof of the old adage that everyone knows a leader when they see one, but no one can say what makes a leader. The topic is explored on a variety of fronts; by the end of the volume, however, the reader still does not have a good grasp on what leadership in the profession actually is, nor how it might compare with or be different from leadership in other areas of work.

The volume contains the proceedings of the 26th Annual (one day) Symposium of the Graduate Alumni and Faculty of the Rutgers School of Communication, Information and Library Studies, which took place April 8, 1988. After a brief introduction by the editor, four specific papers are presented on the topic of leadership. Joanne R. Euster's paper, "The Qualities of Leadership," is a brief summary of some of the conclusions that appear in her

book, *The Academic Library Director: Management Activities and Effectiveness,* Greenwood, 1987, with additional reflections on the nature of the leader as an organizational visionary. Alice Gertzog's chapter on "Perceptions of Leadership," is also a presentation of work in her recent Rutgers dissertation concerning the ways in which leaders (as identified in her study) in the library profession think about and define leadership. She concludes that the real leaders have good ideas, or vision, and the "institutional positions" from which to transmit those ideas. Unasked and unanswered is whether one can qualify as a leader if she or he has only one of these qualifications.

The two remaining formal presentations, by Robert Wedgeworth and Emily Mobley, are not research based reports but are more in the tone of personal reflections of their own experiences in the profession. Wedgeworth's is a particularly personal statement oriented towards the question of how the profession might nurture leadership. Except for saying that one should always seek mentorship, he never really answers his own question. His advice for being a leader is use common sense while taking uncommon chances. Emily Mobley also takes a predominantly personal approach in her paper, but backs it up with a heavy dose of statistics that show the failure of women and minorities to obtain leadership in the profession. Her statistics showing much greater success of women and minorities in the leadership of SLA than in ALA are certainly intriguing and warrant further study. The remaining sections of the volume contain a partial transcript of the panel and audience discussion, an excellent but brief review by Gertzog of the major concepts about leadership appearing in the general social science literature, and a selected annotated bibliography of that literature.

Throughout the volume the problems of separating leadership from "headship" (or management position), is repeatedly mentioned but never directly addressed as it applies to the library and information manage-

ment professions. While also a major problem with the entire literature on leadership, it is somewhat disappointing that the difference was not covered more adequately here since it is a particular problem in a profession such as ours where women are dominant in numbers but not "headship," and where the profession itself suffers from low social esteem and poor monetary rewards. Even though the volume makes only slight progress toward "answers" on the (very large) problem of leadership in the profession, it is interesting reading and should stimulate increased discussion and, hopefully, increased research on the topic. ■

Robert V. Williams
College of Library and Information Science
University of South Carolina

v **Descriptive Statistical Techniques for Librarians, by Arthur W. Hafner, Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 1989, ISBN: 0-83890-510-2. 266 pp.**

Most special libraries are required to keep statistical data for management as well as for comparative studies. In this volume the author stresses the need to communicate more effectively with those who use statistical concepts and terminology. Also involved is the use of statistical data in summarizing reports; we all are impressed by the use of numbers in reports, presentations, and correspondence, and the use of graphs forms a very basic method of communication.

This book is intended to serve as a textbook for a first course in research methods for library and information science students. It can also be used to good advantage by administrators, librarians, curators, archivists, resource center technicians, and managers working in information centers

Of specific interest is the author's description of using and misusing statistics. According to Dr. Hafner, there are are two forms of statistics. Descriptive statistics is a method for summarizing, organizing, and presenting information. By carefully organizing and sum-

marizing information, descriptive statistics communicates trends and spares the end-user the cumbersome task of looking at each piece of information individually. A good example is the National Weather Service which monitors temperature continuously, while newspapers report only the high and low temperatures of the day. These figures communicate the essence of the information and make it easier to identify warming and cooling trends. Moreover, these figures are more manageable than a long list of the succession of temperatures.

The other class of statistics is inferential statistics. Its methods go beyond information summary. It aims to predict new information and to make broad generalizations from results obtained from limited studies. Although the application of inferential statistics is an interesting topic, this book deals exclusively with descriptive statistics or information summary.

Reading this book is a remarkable learning experience. The author presents each chapter succinctly and at the beginning of each chapter there are learning objectives which involve thinking on the part of the reader. This is not an easy book to merely scan, each page has a definitive message.

The basic theme of this book is the use of statistics in all forms of communications. A knowledge of some mathematical statistics will make it easier for the reader to apply the knowledge well defined by Dr. Hafner. For library applications he surveys utilizing statistical data in:

- Acquisitions

- Circulation and Recall

- Check-Out Date

- Copyright date

- Inventory

- Subscriptions

- Weeding

Dr. Hafner's use of pertinent library illustrations stems from a rich background including a master's in mathematics and a doctorate