

Graduate School of Library and Information Science  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

CURRENT ISSUES—elective  
Instructor: Rose Chenoweth

Course Description

Utilizing information about international, federal, state, and local issues, trends, and legislation and community demographics, readings on current library management issues, case studies, and assignments, students will apply what they have learned to their own library. By the end of the course, students will be able to identify at least five current issues or trends that affect public library management and apply new skills to develop related services. They will analyze their current long range plan and services in the light of this new knowledge and apply their new skills to develop a new service response for the library in its changing community, goal, objectives, and one new service development plan. The service plan will address relevant activity steps, gap analysis, and resource allocation to show the full development and implementation of the service.

SYLLABUS OUTLINE

Purpose of course: To help the student identify trends in library management, analyze the larger world, national, and regional as well as the local environment to develop library services responsive to those identified needs.

Objectives:

Students will be able to

1. Identify trends, social/political/economic issues that may affect the library, the populations it serves, or its services
2. Develop a service proposal based on the issues discussed utilizing the framework taught in the Planning for Results series, particularly service responses, goals, objectives, activities, resource allocation, and gap analysis.

Scope and length: The course will consist of 6 live synchronous sessions of 2 hours each for a total of 12 direct contact hours. Students will also be expected to participate asynchronously during the 6 weeks via discussion boards and assignments, which will add another 3-4 contact hours to the course. The course will be conducted using the online learning program (LEEP) developed by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, which combines both synchronous and asynchronous components to deliver course content.

Course Text: Garcia, June and Sandra Nelson. 2007 Public Library Service Responses. Public Library Association, 2007.

If not already owned, the following book can probably be interlibrary loaned:

Nelson, Sandra, Ellen Altman, and Diane Mayo. *Managing for Results: Effective Resource Allocation for Public Libraries*. American Library Association, c2000

The other required readings are available online.

Evaluation of Student Progress: There will be five weekly assignments worth 32 points total and one final project worth 35 points. Class participation will count for up to 12 points. Analysis of or comments in response to others' work will count for up to 16 points. Additions to the Suggested Further Reading Lists will be worth 1 point each up to 5 points total. The student must accumulate a minimum of 75 points of a total possible of 100 points to pass the course. All but the last assignment must be posted on the discussion board where other students will review and comment.

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### Session 1

- A. Introduction to the course, learning outcomes, evaluation, and assignments.  
Sources for further reading.
- B. Environmental Scan: Issues, trends, legislation and happenings in the broader world. Examples of studies or articles discussed in class include but are not limited to the National Rural Assembly, June 2007  
<http://ola.wkkf.org/RPRP/pdf/agenda-nra.pdf> and Rural America in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Carsey Institute)  
[http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/documents/Carsey\\_NRA\\_20Brief\\_Final.pdf](http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/documents/Carsey_NRA_20Brief_Final.pdf)

### **Outcomes:**

Students will be able to

- Identify 3 non-library sources to search for trends, legislation, and other issues that are impacting the world at large
- Analyze these issues to identify at least two that will most likely affect their communities within five years

### **Assignment:**

*Discussion Board:* Find one trend/issue/happening in the broader world not discussed in class and talk about its possible impact on libraries in general and the individual's library in particular and comment on at least one other member's trend. Give a citation for a URL or periodical article that discusses this issue.

Assignment worth 8 points.

*Reading:* Each member will be assigned to read all or part of one of the following reports and to be prepared to discuss ramifications for libraries in general and his or her library in particular in the next class.

- Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources: A Report to the OCLC Membership, c2005. OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc.  
<http://www.oclc.org/reports/2005perceptions.htm> You can download it without registering.)

- Long Overdue: A Fresh Look at Public Attitudes About Libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.  
[http://www.publicagenda.org/research/research\\_reports\\_details.cfm?list=99](http://www.publicagenda.org/research/research_reports_details.cfm?list=99)
- The State of America's Libraries: A report from the American Library Association. ALA, April 2007.  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/pressreleases2007/march2007/stateoflibraries.htm>

### Session 2

- A. The State of the Public Library as seen in library literature. Discussion from readings. General, then in small groups.
- B. Environmental Scan: Finding more about a library's service population

#### **Outcomes:**

Students will be able to

- Identify 3 challenges/opportunities users have identified (in the readings) that would improve their satisfaction with their library
- Identify 3 services that continue to be well received and 3 that need to change (according to the readings)
- Utilize 4 resources to develop an in-depth profile of their community

#### **Assignment:**

*Discussion Board:* Aha! on the issues discussed today especially as to how the findings might be used to benefit the member's own library and one piece of information on the participant's own library profile not known before. Participants should make at least one comment on someone else's posting. Assignment worth 4 points.

*Reading:*

- TRENDS REPORT 2007. Alliance Library System.  
<http://www.alliancelibrarysystem.com/pdf/Trends2007.pdf>
- The Top Trends. Library and Information Technology Association.  
<http://www.lita.org/ala/lita/litaresources/toptechtrends/midwinter2005.cfm>  
Read one article on each trend listed.

### Session 3

- A. Web 2.0/Library 2.0/Technology Trends discussion
- B. Small group work on Building Better Communities Award: 2007 Award Winners. [http://www.sirsidynix.com/Company/bbc\\_awards.php](http://www.sirsidynix.com/Company/bbc_awards.php) After a brief demonstration of Second Life (the first award given), each small group will look at one of the projects and comment on the value for the community this library serves or the library profession as a whole.

#### **Outcomes:**

Students will be able to

- Identify 5 key components of Web 2.0 that be used effectively in a library
- Identify 1 Library 2.0 component that the participant's library could utilize immediately
- Recognize 3 elements that make the "Building Better Communities Award" nominees exemplary libraries

**Assignment:**

*Discussion Board:* Discuss how one technology trend discussed today could benefit the participant's library and its service population. This should not be a service already offered. Then comment on one other participant's submission. Assignment worth 8 points.

*Read:* Garcia, June and Sandra Nelson. 2007 Public Library Service Responses. PLA, 2007. Be familiar with the various service responses in general and the format of the content under each service response.

Handout on Writing Goals and Objectives sent via email.

Session 4

- A. Service Responses discussion
- B. Goals, Objectives practice exercises in small groups
- C. Appropriate Activities Exercises in small groups

**Outcomes:**

Students will be able to

- Match identified needs in the their communities to at least one service response
- Develop an appropriate goal for a selected service response
- Develop two objectives for a given goal and service response
- Identify appropriate activities that would help a library reach an objective and goal

**Assignment:**

*Discussion Board:* Choose a service response, one goal, and two objectives for the final project. Choose two activities that will contribute to meeting the objectives. Indicate the steps needed to complete the activities. Explain how the choices address an unmet need in the library's community. These will be used in the final project. Post the final product on the discussion board. Then comment on at least one other student's work on this same assignment, paying special attention to whether the activities will contribute to meeting the goals and objectives. The first part of the assignment is due 8:00 a.m CST Monday before class with the comments on other's work at 8:00 a.m. the day of class. Assignment worth 12 points.

*Read:* Resource Allocation Handouts sent by email  
Gap Analysis Handout sent by email (Can read more about it in  
Managing for Results)

### Session 5

- A. Case Studies on Resource Allocation discussion. Then small group discussion.
- B. Gap Analysis discussion.

#### **Outcomes:**

Students will be able to

- Identify four resources
- Identify 1 example of capacity, use, access, and age or condition for the resources
- Identify the resources affected by chosen goal or objective in a case study and the information needed to address each resource
- Identify the steps in completing a gap analysis

#### **Assignment:**

Complete and send to instructor by 8 a.m. CST the day of final class: Rework Session 4's assignment to reflect comments from instructor and other class members. Choose one activity, identify the resources needed to complete the activity (and all of its steps), and complete a gap analysis for staff, collection, facilities, and technology on what the library currently has to offer in resources for the activity and what it would need to find. Complete a budget to address the gaps. Assignment worth 35 points.

### Session 6

- A. Managing Change Discussion
- B. Case Studies (Small Group Work)

#### **Outcomes:**

Students will be able to

- Identify at least 4 methods to help manage change
- In a given situation, identify at least two forces pushing for change and two pushing against change

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:** There will be an ongoing discussion board where students can add readings on issues related to class discussions. The following readings are to encourage further exploration but are not required reading for

the course. Each addition to the list is worth 1 point with a maximum of 5 points awarded for this activity.

Public Library Data Service Statistical Report

<http://www.ala.org/ala/pla/plapubs/pldsstatreport/pldsstatistical.cfm>

American Fact Finder [http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?\\_lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en)

Stephen's Lighthouse [http://www.sirsi.com/Resources/abram\\_articles.html](http://www.sirsi.com/Resources/abram_articles.html)

Learning 2.0 Public Library of Charlotte Mecklenberg County

<http://plcmclearning.blogspot.com/>

Herring Mark. 10 Reasons Why the Internet Is No Substitute for a Library.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/online/selectedarticles/10reasonswhy.cfm>

Are Libraries Obsolete? 33 Reasons Librarians Are Still Extremely Important. By Will Sherman. <http://www.degreetutor.com/library/adult-continued-education/librarians-needed>

Stephens, Michael. Web 2.0 & Libraries: Best Practices for Social Software. Library Technology Reports. July/August 2006 vol. 42/no.4

Levine, Jenny. Gaming & Libraries: Intersection of Services. Library Technology Reports. September/October 2006. vol. 42/no. 5

Nelson, Sandra, Ellen Altman, and Diane Mayo. Managing for Results: Effective Resource Allocation for Public Libraries. American Library Association, c2000

Mayo, Diane and Jeanne Goodrich. Staffing for Results: A Guide for Working Smarter. American Library Association, c2002.

Bryan, Cheryl. Managing Facilities for Results. American Library Association, c2007.

The Top Trends. Library and Information Technology Association.

<http://www.lita.org/ala/lita/litaresources/toptechtrends/toptechtrendsconference.cfm>

Listen or read the trends for one of the following--2006 ALA Annual Meeting, 2005 Annual Meeting.