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"Introduction" to *The Dynamic Library Organizations in a Changing Environment: A Special Issue of Journal of Library Administration*, Volume 20, Number 2 (1994)

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The Dynamic Library Organizations in a Changing Environment

Joan Giesecke
Guest Editor

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Introduction

ABOUT THE GUEST EDITOR

Joan Giesecke, MLS, MA, DPA, is Associate Dean for Collections and Services at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries, where she is responsible for public and technical service operations. Prior to joining the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Dr. Giesecke was Associate Librarian, and head of Technical Services at George Mason University. She also teaches graduate classes for Emporia State University School of Library and Information Management. She is an active member of the American Library Association, and does research, writing, and presentations in the area of organizational decision-making and design. She is a member of the 1993 UCLA Senior Fellows class.

The articles in this collection are based on the discussions and work of the 1993 Senior Fellows as they participated in the UCLA Graduate School of Library and Information Science executive development program. The program included a combination of seminars on topics of interest to participants and unstructured time for research and discussion with colleagues on issues of common concern. The 1993 Fellows focused on the enormous challenges that librarians face today as libraries reengineer to meet the needs of patrons while struggling to stay afloat in today's changing environment. The group debated organizational processes, strategies, and structures, exploring how dynamic organizations must change to meet the needs of their patrons in the changing environment of higher education today. While the group discussed the concepts of teamwork, quality control, and customer service, they practiced the skills of an executive team, debating issues, constructively challenging ideas, and bringing multiple perspectives to the conversation. Out of these conversations grew an interest in creating a collection of articles exploring the key issues facing today's libraries.

The process of creating this group of articles is an example of how a management team can function effectively in diverse environments. From the beginning this project has been a team effort. At the 1993 program, the group outlined and debated possible topics for the collection. Each participant contributed ideas and helped shape the initial plan. After we returned to our libraries, each person decided what role they wanted to play in this project. Seven members of the group wrote articles, while others agreed to be review-

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ers. At the Midwinter meeting of the American Library Association the group gathered to revise the outline, one more time, and agree to final assignments and roles. The discussion at the meeting was at times unstructured and playful, while still keeping the final goal in mind. By the end of the meeting, order had been restored and a time line for finishing the project was established. Group support was important for helping keep everyone, both writers and reviewers, on target, providing valuable feedback on the articles, and encouraging everyone to meet their assignments.

To develop teams that can succeed although members are located in different geographic areas is one of the challenges facing libraries today. The Senior Fellows demonstrated how that can be done. The team had a task, a variety of skills needed to meet the goal, and the willingness to spend time and effort shaping the project and ensuring that it was completed. Leadership was shared with different team members taking on different roles as needed. Help from outside of the team was solicited as necessary to round out the skills of the group. E-mail messages, telephone calls, and faxes were used to keep everyone informed of progress, and provide support whenever we needed encouragement. It is difficult to capture on paper the spirit of collaboration that developed as we worked on our project. However, as Susan Lee comments in her article in this collection, we tried to model a cognitively complex team, and generally we succeeded in our task.

These articles reflect the interests and concerns of the group as we examined today's organizations. To begin the collection, Beverly Lynch provides a framework for the pieces by describing issues that have concerned library leadership for the past thirty-six years and how participants in executive development programs such as the Senior Fellows Program have addressed these concerns. She also provides an introduction to the individual articles in this collection. Susan Lee addresses the issues from the viewpoint of leadership. She profiles a new kind of leader for today's dynamic organization. Margo Crist and Joan Giesecke look at organizational culture and design. Brinley Franklin describes the cost of quality and provides guidance on how to begin to measure quality costs. Frank D'Andraia provides an opinion piece on the place of libraries in the information market. Finally, Sarah Michalak explores the

problems of space and facilities, how to incorporate the electronic library into today's and yesterday's buildings.

In closing, I wish to thank the members of the team who made this work possible and to thank Jan Medcalf and the members of the office staffs who provided support to all of us.

Joan Giesecke