

TRUSTEE



Educating Future Librarians with a New Focus on Information Justice and Equity

by Jian Qin



The Master of Science in Library and Information Science (MLIS) program at [Syracuse University iSchool](#) recently went through a process of redefining the program focus.

The new focus—information justice and equity, community engagement, and technology—is a response of the iSchool to address the changing environment under which the new information professionals and librarians operate.

The changes are not only technological but more importantly, social and cultural because of biases and discriminations toward people of color and groups who do not align with “mainstream” culture. These biases and discriminations have resulted in information injustice and inequality for communities. The future librarians and information professionals would need to have the ability and skills to recognize the biases and discriminations and promote information justice and equity for the communities they serve.

The SU iSchool faculty started revamping the MLIS program and curriculum in the middle of the pandemic last August. The new themes of the MLIS program in information equity and justice, community engagement, and technology have been the foundation for revising the program outcomes and curriculum.

Under this new program focus, graduates from the SU iSchool MLIS program are expected to have the ability to advance information justice and equity, understand, engage, and service users and their communities, design and innovate to create equitable, just, and engaging information artifacts, including services, systems, spaces, resources, and

technologies, lead and manage people and projects in an equitable, just, and culturally competent manner, and demonstrate information literacy and technology agility.

Aligning the MLIS program focus and learning outcomes with career pathways, we changed the approach to how to organize elective courses. In the previous version, what we used to call “the focus areas” or specializations are based on settings (i.e., type of institutions such as academic or public libraries) are shifted to professional career pathways, emphasizing more on functional abilities and skills that enable students to work in any settings. The newly defined professional pathways include user services and community engagement, archives and special collections, digital curation and services, organization and management of information and knowledge, children and youth services, digital information systems, and information research and analysis.

Elective courses for the MLIS program as well as relevant courses from the [MS in Applied Data Science \(ADS\)](#) and [MS in Information Management \(IM\)](#) are mapped to these professional pathways, together with sample job titles for these pathways. We invited librarians from public and academic libraries, historical society, and other organizations to form an MLIS Guiding Council to solicit their input for our plan for program revision and received very positive feedback. The faculty is now working on core course updates to align the content with the new program focus.

The iSchool is proud for the many outstanding MLIS graduates, e.g., Emily Dowie G’17 is one of this year’s [Movers & Shakers in the category of Advocates](#), and for its nationally renowned faculty. Some of our nationally recognized faculty include; Dr. Rachel Clarke won the 2020 ALCTS Outstanding Publication Award, Dr. Beth Patin received SU Meredith Teaching Recognition Awards this year, Dr. Megan Oakleaf is chosen as the 2021 recipient of the Library Instruction Round Table (LIRT) Librarian Recognition Award, and Dr. Jian Qin was the recipient of the 2020 LITA/OCLC Kilgour Research Award.



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Greetings LTAS members and library supporters.

It seems that, for the most part, our libraries are back to a more normal operation. Summer reading programs for kids and adults are in full swing, some of us have enjoyed programs that have been offered, and patrons are absolutely delighted to be able to come in and browse. Sure, our patrons have been able to go online to find materials to borrow. However, there is something so satisfying about being able to wander the stacks, look at the displays, and actually interact with wonderful library staff.

I hope you are enjoying the digital version of our Trustee newsletter. This venue is working well as we continue to transition to the benefits of being a NYLA section. However, a print version may be part of the picture because it was always well received by our members. So, feel free to share your comments on our efforts as we move forward with our growth as a section.

I thought it was important for trustees to have a better understanding of what a degree in what used to be called Library Science consists of in the 21st century.

In this July issue of the Trustees, we welcome insight from Jian Qin, Professor and Director of the ISchool at Syracuse University. There is much more to the profession and the degree now than in the past. As we all learned due to COVID stay-at-home months, technology is a big part of the library world and that has resulted in having to have a handle on both print and digital materials. Congratulations to our excellent library directors and staff for keeping us moving forward with these tools. Be sure to support your directors and staff in their educational efforts. Workshops, webinars, and in-person skill upgrade opportunities are vital in keeping up with what our patrons need, even if they do not know, yet, what they need.

It is important, when working with our library directors, that we, the trustees, keep in mind that, while we are responsible for the oversight of the library, we are not an operational staff. The library director is responsible for the daily running of the library. Should we have a concern about “how things are done”, we need to discuss that with our directors and work concerns out. We are not there to take the reins.

The below graphic was drawn from pages 107 and 108 in the Handbook for Library Trustees that outlines the role of directors and trustees. Certainly, there is a relationship that recognizes the board as the higher authority. However, the graphic illustrates how both roles work together as two sides to the same coin to provide quality library services. Please take a moment to read it over. Look at the source pages for a bit more detail on each thought.

I hope you take advantage of all your own library has to offer. Be sure to go in and browse, see what changes have been made, give your staff a chance to see you as a patron as well as a trustee. It means quite a bit to staff to know that you are a vibrant part of their workplace and not just a once-a-month visitor.

Wishing you happy reading,

Adria Ripka

A Comparison of the Roles & Responsibilities of the Library Director and the Board of Trustees

It is important for all parties to have a clear understanding of how the duties board of trustees and the library director relate to one another. The trustees oversee the funding and mission of the library for the community. The Director is the chief operating officer for the organization.

Duties of the Library Director

Directly responsible for administration of the library

Apprise board of need for new policies, policy revisions. Implement policies as adopted by the board.

Promote the mission of the library within the community.

Coordinate and implement a strategic plan.

Participate in board meetings, Friends' meetings, and library system meetings

Prepare an annual budget in consultation with the board. Decide on use of money based the approved budget.

Make trustees aware of education opportunities.

Duties of the Board of Trustees

Recruit and employ a qualified library director.

Identify and adopt written policies to govern the internal and external operations of the library.

Ensure the library has a strategic plan.

Secure adequate funds to carry out the library operations. Authorize expenditures.

Promote the mission of the library within the community and society in general.

Attend educational opportunities for trustees to be knowledgeable on all aspects of the role.

Participate in board meetings, Friends' meetings, and library system meetings.

The Handbook for Library Trustees is a great resource for understanding the world of your library. These guidelines were taken from pages 107 and 108 of the current [handbook](#). Not clear on your [role](#)? You have resources through NYLA, LTAS, our Ask Joe consultant, and the Department of Library Development.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings to LTA Members:

Our libraries are now open and are busy! But as we move into this hot summer, I am sure that you and your directors and staff are thinking differently about what services you are providing and how you provide them. My library still requires masks as our local vaccination rate is still not high enough, we still have the plexiglass barrier at the desk, and some parts of the library are not yet open to the general public. But we have stopped curbside service and checking in for contact tracing, there is a wonderful calendar of programming for all ages, and the summer reading program is already going gangbusters.

What is different? We have a large tent in our back yard and lots of outside furniture for programs and the increased Wifi use, we reorganized stacks and indoor furniture for improved patron service, and we are continuing some direct patron services such as home delivery and book giveaways at the local food pantry. As trustees, we need to help our libraries to be nimbly navigating this post-pandemic period.

We look forward to seeing you at the NYLA Conference in Syracuse in November – we hope that the in-person conference will happen! Please check out the information about the conference [here](#).

LTA has two programs addressing legal issues for library trustees. Another welcome bit of legal news – the NYS Legislature has passed a bill that now mandates two hours of training annually for library trustees. Collectively we oversee an enormous amount of public money, so regular training for our responsibilities is a good thing!

As a Section of NYLA, LTA now participates in many of the organization's activities and so we recently agreed to provide some funding for the NYLA Legal Defense Fund. Libraries and individuals can request support from NYLA when major legal issues come up and as trustees of public libraries, this is a valuable service to know about.

More legal help (*do you see a pattern here?!*) - by going to [this website](#) you can also get help with legal questions. Ask Joe Eisner and Ask the Lawyer and Ask the HR Expert all will give some advice about issues and questions that library trustees run into.

Check them out.

I hope your summer is good, that you have no legal issues, and that you are enjoying your busy library.

--Jean Currie, President

FROM THE STATE LIBRARY



More Than Ever - New York's Libraries Are Bridging the Digital Divide

During the pandemic, the critical role of public libraries in ensuring that everyone has access to internet connections and devices both at the library and from home became crystal clear. Also evident is the important roles libraries play in working with community partners to ensure that every New Yorker can make effective use of technology.

Two recent initiatives supported by the State Library and federal funding will help to build the capacity of New York's libraries to advance digital equity and digital inclusion in their communities.

Digital Equity - Developing An Outline for Collaborative Change

With support from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services under the federal CARES Act, the State Library and State Education Department offered a series of informational webinars leading up to three successful Spring 2021 Digital Equity Summits involving hundreds of stakeholders from across the State.

The resulting June 2021 Summit report *Achieving Digital Equity in New York: An Outline for Collaborative Change* focuses on strategies to:

Make Digital Inclusion a State-Level Priority;

Create and Sustain Thriving Digital Equity Ecosystems Across the Entire State; and Achieve a Digital Justice Mindset

For more information about the summits, the report and to view the archived webinars, visit the [State Library's website](#).

A Great Opportunity for Libraries: The American Rescue Plan and the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF)

Public libraries have an enormous window of opportunity to help their patrons obtain affordable internet access.

On June 29, 2021 the Federal Communications Commission will open a 45-day filing window for the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) program, which will make \$7.17 billion available to fund broadband service and devices "off-campus" for libraries and schools.

The ECF will make it possible for libraries nationwide to offer their patrons, including students, new ways to go online and bring connectivity home. Although the FCC's E-rate program has supported broadband services to and within school and library premises, the new ECF leverages the E-rate application process to let schools and libraries connect their students, staff, and patrons at home.

There are several significant reasons why libraries should apply for ECF support:

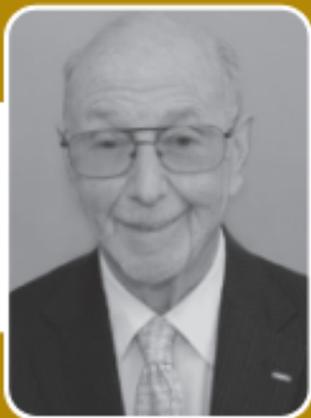
The ECF offers an incredible opportunity for students and library patrons to receive free services and devices.

The support covers broadband services and devices for use “off-campus”. The program will reimburse 100 percent of the costs associated with purchasing eligible services and equipment (no matching contribution is required). The State Library hosted a webinar about ECF on June 4 and a copy of the slides and recording for that webinar is posted on the [State Library website](#). The FCC Rules are [here](#).

A robust training plan designed by USAC to help libraries and schools understand and navigate through the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program is available [here](#).

Libraries interested in applying are encouraged to contact their public library system and/or the State Library's E-Rate Coordinator Natalie McDonough at Natalie.McDonough@nysed.gov.

The following should not be construed as legal advice for which the services of counsel should be obtained.



ASK JOE EISNER

Q. Is there a statutory requirement that a printed agenda must be provided to each board member when a board meeting is scheduled at which library business will be discussed?

No. However, a printed agenda serves several purposes: it provides board members with the opportunity to familiarize themselves in advance about what will be discussed at the meeting, thus helping to encourage a more informed exchange of views by and between board members.

In accordance with the primary intent of the Open Meetings Law (OML), which is to promote transparency in government, materials such as the agenda and any documents distributed to the board must also be available for distribution to members of the public who attend a board meeting or request them, whether prior to, during or subsequent to the meeting.

Additionally, the materials must be posted on the library's website to enable community residents to be able to consult them without having to attend the board meeting. This is also important for non-residents who may own property within the library's service area, and who may be affected financially or in other ways by a library board's decision which may result in an increase in the tax levy on such property.

Q. If an item does not appear on the published agenda, may it be brought up for discussion?

Yes. This can be done in either of two ways: a) acquiescence by a majority of the board members in attendance; or b) by the passage of a motion approved by a majority of board members to discuss the item

Q. A board member at a meeting presents a motion that is seconded. Are either the presenter or seconder required to vote "yes" on the motion?

No. The purpose of presenting and seconding a motion after a board discussion about a proposed action is to vote on the proposed action in order to determine whether there are enough "yes" votes to approve the proposed action.

Q. Is a library board required to include in the minutes of its meetings remarks made to a board during a public comment?

- No. Minutes of a board meeting should record only those board actions and statements which are related to board decisions and policies concerned with a board's statutory responsibility to address such issues.
- Despite the fact that a board allows or solicits comments from any public in attendance at its meetings, this does not confer on non-board members either the right or the privilege of having their remarks or comments recorded in the minutes of a board meeting. Neither do members of the public in attendance at a public Board meeting have either the right or the privilege of dealing issues with board members.

For further information or to ask questions on any library subject, Joe may be contacted at 516 931 3868, or jeisner@optonline.net.

LTAS BOARD MEMBERS

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