

ACRL/Harvard : Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians July 2015
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Through the generosity of the AAHSL Leadership Scholarship and my home institution, I attended the ACRL/Harvard Academic Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians (LIAL). LIAL provided a week-long, intensive experience for 106 academic librarians from 33 U.S. states and seven other countries. Each day started out with our assigned small group meeting (approximately eight librarians), followed by lecture/discussion sessions in the morning and afternoon. These sessions were taught by five professors from Harvard's Graduate School of Education (HGSE) and by library organization development consultant Maureen Sullivan.

The faculty quality was excellent and each session leader did a very good job of engaging as many participants as possible through discussion. There were frequent break-outs to discuss a particular topic with a neighboring participant. The foundation for the course is the leadership framework outlined in the book *Reframing Academic Leadership* by Lee Bolman and Joan Gallos, a husband and wife team based out of HGSE. Bolman filled in for Gallos teaching several sessions during the institute. When I received the book before the institute I feared it would be as dry as the Sahara, but it is actually very practical and a quick read.

The premise of the framework is that leaders need to embrace and apply four skill areas:

- Structural: building clarity and capacity
- Human resources: fostering a caring & productive campus
- Political: respecting and managing differences
- Symbolic: keeping the faith and celebrating the mission

We used the framework to explore five case studies from industry, a non-profit organization, higher education, and a library. Through the case studies we analyzed the players' use of the leadership frames. On Wednesday afternoon we worked with a partner on an exercise to examine a personal improvement goal, and what's behind the resistance, or "immunity" to changing in order to achieve the goal. I found this exercise useful as it helped me get at the underlying fears that may be holding me back from accomplishing certain goals.

My goals for participating in the LIAL were to both enhance my leadership skills for my role within the Library, and so that I may contribute towards meeting current and future challenges in my institution. I feel confident that LIAL provided very practical, comprehensive, and meaningful lessons in how to reach these goals. With anything as lofty as becoming a great leader, change doesn't happen overnight. There was a lot of information to absorb, and I have found myself referring back to my notes and the readings and handouts to recall the lessons and key points. I have already begun taking baby steps in my weaker frame areas. I will be applying the knowledge I gained both within my managerial unit and throughout my interactions at my institution and beyond in order to become the leader I want to be. And I've now a cohort of leader colleagues to turn to via an ongoing email list!

Here are three favorite quotes from my notes:

Two from Lee Bolman: "The frame we don't see will bite us." And "Powerless corrupts."

On leading with soul, from Rumi: "Where did I come from, and what am I supposed to be doing?"