

CONFERENCE REPORT

Academic Business Library Directors Annual Meeting

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ABLD 2015 Annual Meeting

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee

April 21-23, 2015

<http://www.abld.org/>

Overview

The annual meeting of the Academic Business Library Directors (ABLD) convened at the Owen Graduate School of Management at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, and was hosted by Hilary Craiglow, the director of Vanderbilt's Walker Management Library. A member organization comprised of library directors from the top academic business libraries in North America, ABLD serves as a forum for sharing information and viewpoints about business library trends and challenges. This year, 40 ABLD members, as well as representatives from ABLD's European and Asian business librarian counterpart groups, attended the annual meeting, the location of which rotates among the ABLD member institutions each year. The well-attended conference drew representation from new member institutions Georgetown University, University of Maryland, University of Pittsburgh, and Southern Methodist University, and new representatives from established member institutions Northwestern University, Indiana University, and The Ohio State University.

Day One: Entrepreneurship in Libraries

This year's theme was "Entrepreneurship and Innovation," and the conference highlighted how member libraries meet the needs of our respective campuses. The conference program chair, ABLD Vice-Chair Stephen Hayes of the University of Notre Dame, worked with other board members to select the sessions, which included ABLD member presentations alongside excellent talks and workshops presented by faculty and staff from the Owen Graduate School of Management faculty and the Nashville Entrepreneurship Center. Owen's Dean M. Eric Johnson opened the conference with a description of his experience as the head of publications for Informs. As an academic, he explored the need to balance between the library's financial burden of making scholarly publications available to its community and the need for the academic societies to have a revenue stream to support their activities.

The conference kicked off with sessions centered on the culture of innovation in our libraries; namely, how librarians are supporting different types of student entrepreneurial projects. Hayes talked about the programs the University of Notre Dame library developed to support students working on entrepreneurial projects. Laura Leavitt shared how the librarians at Michigan State University support entrepreneurs, especially in the context of the

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outreach programs that the library runs. And, Dee Stonberg focused on how the Babson College library supports undergraduate students and how entrepreneurial thought and action is applied to all staff members at the school through performance evaluations.

In addition, Roye Werner of Carnegie Mellon University, provided a summary of the ABLD Annual Reports, which each member is required to submit. The theme for the 2015 reports was "Survivor," and Werner used the reality show as the basis for the presentation.

Following Werner, Alicia Estes of New York University, reported on a research project undertaken with Deb Wallace, Harvard Business School, and Hannah Rasmussen, Harvard Business School CLIR Fellow, which explored the role of research taking place at ABLD member libraries. The goal of their research project was to explore the research being done in business library space.

During the *Pecha Kucha* sessions, several ABLD librarians shared brief overviews of activities at their institutions, including:

- OverDrive e-books and e-audiobooks at Duke University, presented by Meg Trauner.
- *Financial Times* academic program at McGill University, presented by Amber Lannon.
- Marketing a start-up library at University of Illinois Urbana, presented by Becky Smith.
- Overlap between business curricular support and commercialization support at The Ohio State University, presented by Gene Springs.
- Helping faculty at the University of Toronto manage new research integrity rules, presented by Sean Forbes.
- Assisting STEM students in a new 5th-year MBA program at the University of Alabama, presented by Lee Pike.

The conference also included a vendor showcase of business-centric publisher discussions about new products and opportunities. These vendors included: BCC Research; Business Expert Press; CalcBench; Cengage; CMIE; PrivCo; and Richard K. Miller & Associates. Vendors in attendance vary from year to year to ensure that a wide variety of business publishers have the opportunity to share new features of their projects.

The last panel of the day, "Space: the Final Frontier," featured four librarians talking about space pressures and managing with less real estate at their libraries. Kathleen Dreyer of Columbia University, Alicia Estes of New York University, and Kristin McDonough of the New York Public Library, discussed new spaces for students and community members carved out of traditional library spaces. Corey Seeman of the University of Michigan talked about how library space was dramatically altered and repurposed.

Conference attendees then toured the Nashville Entrepreneur Center located in downtown Nashville. Michael Burcham, Founding CEO of the Center, led a session in which he and a colleague discussed how they worked with budding entrepreneurs at the center, especially in helping them craft their "idea frames" for their businesses. They promoted a model that forced them to think about the entire lifecycle of their new entity and provided the new companies with a better chance of survival. The session increased understanding of the information needs faced by entrepreneurs, whether they are students or adults, seeking to move off in a new direction. The tour finished with a group exercise in utilizing an entrepreneurial approach to design the best library for entrepreneurs.

Day Two: Business Faculty Presentations and International Perspectives

On the second full day of the conference, Owen School faculty gave two great presentations. First, David Owens, Professor for the Practice of Management and Innovation and the author of the 2011 book, *Creative People Must Be Stopped*, gave a riveting talk on innovation and the need for all elements of the academic enterprise to embrace creative solutions to the problems of the day. Owen also shared the problems that stem from group-think that remove creativity from an organization.

In the second presentation, Royce Werner from Carnegie Mellon discussed global issues with CLADEA (Business Library Directors Group of the Latin American Business School Association) and collaborative opportunities that might exist with ABLD. Andy Priestner, Cambridge University, and Gina de Alwis, Singapore Institute of Management, both provided insight on the key issues and opportunities facing colleagues in Europe and Asia. The primary challenge lies with administrators lacking an understanding of library value and correspondingly low library budgets. The opportunities included embracing new technology and reinventing libraries, evolving beyond traditional functions. Finally, Marcella Barnhart, University of Pennsylvania; Alicia Estes, New York University; and Angela Horne, UCLA, discussed their respective partnerships to support global programs at their institutions. NYU supported Executive MBA programs in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai, and UCLA supported programs in Singapore. These partnerships included training staff at on-site libraries in these locations and supporting students remotely.

The afternoon sessions focused on students and better ways that libraries can support their needs. Andy Priestner presented "Innovative Library Research: the Rise of Ethnography." He shared the way that he and colleagues at Cambridge University used observation of students to better craft library services to meet the community's needs. In addition to user interfaces and experience, the library considered questions and behaviors of students in the library.

A panel on teaching and learning showcased different programs taking place at four universities. In addition, Tomalee Doan showcased how Purdue University was changing the library to be a central learning space on campus. Doan also shared how Purdue librarians were playing a major role in redesigned classes at the university in all disciplines. Laura Leavitt talked about her new class at Michigan State University, a for-credit class on business intelligence resources.

The final speaker was another Owen faculty member: Kimberly Pace, Professor for the Practice of Communication. Focusing on how librarians may articulate value to the communities they serve, she led the group in an exercise to develop a librarian executive brand, acknowledging how other people's perceptions are based on communication and affiliation and may be changed through authentic interactions.

The 2015 ABLD meeting provided excellent discussions related to both librarianship and business. By virtue of having three different speakers from Owen School of Management, it had more business talks compared to previous years, which in many ways, was one of the best parts of the conference.