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The Handoff

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Editor's Desk

The Handoff

Eric C. Shoaf

Four years can be a long time, but as we all know time can pass quickly. That is the case for my association with *LL&M*. It has been two years as associate editor, and another two

as editor, and it has been rewarding in many ways. Some were challenging, some unexpected, but all were marked by an appreciation of how LLAMA is an important contributor to the work of ALA as well as the daily work of library leaders. We are in an era of unprecedented change, and change has been a constant refrain in the editorial content of the journal for quite a while. There have been several distinct changes to the journal over the past two years including:

- a name change to reflect the changing organization; new cover design;
- deletion of paper copies into an all-electronic format; series entitled “Perspectives on Leadership” to mine the knowledge of top practitioners;
- expansion of editorial commentary on the blog;
- the first co-editorship for leading the journal’s editorial content and direction; and
- advanced planning for a new *LL&M* that fully exploits Web capabilities.

On this last bullet, the work of co-associate editors Pixey Moseley and Wendi Kaspar in this planning has been notable. Working with Executive Director Kerry Ward and LLAMA President Gail Kennedy, we have sketched a plan that moves the journal into a new role as the publication of record for the division. It represents yet more positive change and a move to maintain *LL&M* as the cutting-edge journal in the evolving electronic publishing landscape.

In stepping away from the editorship, I note the changes within myself and my career that took place over the past four years that included a new position at a new institution in a different part of the country, four highly supportive LLAMA presidents, working with authors from around the world on some thirty-six feature articles published, and the continued response and acknowledgment of LLAMA members I met over time at professional meetings

and via teleconferences and e-mail. Specifically, I want to single out for special thanks to former editor Gregg Sapp for his knowledge and advice as I moved into the roll, the efforts of Diane Bisom, the enthusiasm of Pixey Mosley and Wendi Kaspar, and, importantly, the guidance and counsel of Paul Anderson, which have done much to shape and re-shape *LL&M* over the years.

Below is a message from incoming editors Pixey and Wendi along with newly selected associate editor, Beth Blakesley, which outlines some elements of their plan for *LL&M*:

Several things will be changing for the next issue of *Library Leadership & Management* in a way that will align with LLAMA’s new strategic directions and that position *LL&M* to lead the way in scholarly communication, practical knowledge, and collaboration with its membership. First, the journal will be going open access on a new platform to offer improved readability and the opportunity to take advantage of Web-based features, such as active linking, RSS feeds, and multimedia. Second, we will be restructuring the contents of the journal over the next year to be the voice of LLAMA, more responsive to the diverse interests of LLAMA members, and modeled to support LLAMA’s strategic initiatives. *LL&M* will transition to a hybrid model that will include some scholarly, peer-reviewed articles, along with other features about applied best practices or transferable opportunities for you to implement at your library.

Third, we hope to take better advantage of the technology available with an online-only publication. Though the journal will still be published on a quarterly basis, the online format will allow opportunities for ongoing interactions between authors, readers, and the editors through blogs, RSS feeds, surveys, and other plug-ins. We will be moving away from the traditional two-column page layout to a publication that will allow for embedded linking and faster time-to-release for manuscripts, columns, and updates.

Although the journal will begin to look really different, we intend to put a lot of effort into maintaining the quality of the content. We will be bringing a new look to some of the current columns and launching new ones. We really want to make *LL&M* “your journal.” One new feature we would like to launch is an “Ask an Expert” column where

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you can send scenarios or questions about a managerial or leadership challenge that has you stumped. We will pick a question or two and go out to experts to get ideas for tackling the problem.

According to the last membership survey in 2008, *LL&M* was seen as the primary value. We are aware that recent technical issues in the transition to electronic only

and the lack of opportunity for peer review have been frustrating for many of our readers. Recent strategic planning activities by the LLAMA Executive Committee and LLAMA Board have helped us understand the audience needs and interests that make LLAMA, and subsequently *LL&M*, more relevant. We look forward to your thoughts and suggestions about the journal.