

Leadership Institute for Academic Library Managers

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The AAHSL Diverse Leadership Scholarship enabled me to attend the 7th Annual Leadership Institute for Academic Library Managers organized by Siena College in Albany, New York, during July 26 – July 30, 2021.

Agenda and Instruction

The Leadership Institute for Academic Library Managers is part of the Siena College Institute for Leadership Development. The Institute is taught by faculty in the Business School, focusing primarily on management strategies and skills. The week-long institute covered topics such as emotional intelligence and cognitive styles, characteristics of great teams, leadership styles, and strategies to drive change.

Before the Institute started, we received the course syllabi and a short list of reading materials and videos to study. The actual instruction is similar to seminars. There were eight sessions, each led by a business professor. We engaged in group discussions and small-team activities. The last session on the fifth day was mostly a free discussion of what we learned, and what short-term action items and long-term goals we plan to take on when we go back to work.

Cohort

The institute is a fairly small program in terms of number of participants. In previous years there have been 18-20 participants attending. This year there were 13 people coming from a variety of institutions, including community colleges, private colleges and universities, and large public universities. The group included librarians from all library departments with varying management experiences, ranging from mostly supervising student workers to being director of the library. The instructors encouraged the cohort to establish a network after the Institute. At the end of the week, the group created a Slack project where people can keep in touch and share experiences in management. The group will meet online regularly to discuss management topics and specific workplace issues.

Main Takeaways

Team Building: Good teams go through five stages: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning. Once a team is formed, members need to brainstorm ideas on goals, expectations and roles, and how the team would communicate via meetings and other means. Then the team should agree on a team contract or norm to ensure that everyone shares the understanding, and there is consensus on how to address disagreements or conflicts. At certain stages of the team project, the

team can go through the debriefing process to assess the effectiveness of the team and discuss possible improvements.

Leadership styles: We learned about different types of leadership styles: Telling, Coaching, Participating, and Delegating. When to use which style is dependent on the maturity of the followers facing a specific situation. The instructor led us through many different scenarios to select the appropriate leadership style, depending on whether the followers have competence and/or commitment to work on their own. For example, Telling is appropriate for followers who lack competence and commitment to work on their own, and Delegating is good for people who are competent and committed.

Impact on Job

I have taken courses before on some aspects of management, but the Institute provided me a comprehensive framework on management and leadership. I can apply what I learned to help everyone in my team work more collaboratively, and coach individuals more effectively based on their needs and capabilities. I created a list of action items, both for more immediate time frame and for longer term. My short-term action items include tasks such as creating team meeting norms, and encouraging healthy team communication. My long term goals include reserving more time for strategic thinking, becoming better in delegating, and helping my team adapt to changes. I also plan to share knowledge and resources I learned from this Institute with my colleagues through team meetings and individual coaching sessions.

The Siena College Leadership Institute for Academic Library Managers teaches basic management concepts and theories and their practical application in libraries. It is a small program that encourages in-depth interaction with the instructors and fellow attendees. It is a great program for librarians who are new or have some experiences in management and leadership.