Chapter XIV

Re-Engineering Library Education

Vicki L. Gregory
University of South Florida-Tampa, USA

The revolutionary changes in the educational curriculum for schools of library and information science being evinced by the exponential expansion of computer-based technologies require a reexamination of the skills and expertise needed to be acquired by the next wave of academic librarians. This is critical in order that they may continue to be able to provide information services and resources to the academic communities within which those librarians will practice their profession. In addition, it is important to meet emerging educational needs in terms of various multiculturalism and diversity issues that are arising today as well as a thorough understanding of research theory and practice. Implicit in these examinations is a need to review the way library school faculty will be teaching, using newer technologies including Web-delivery of courses, and how faculty should exhibit the skills needed in order to be able to deliver courses using the new technology-centered methods. Finally, this chapter will emphasize the importance of continuing education for future academic librarians and current professionals.
CURRENT AND FUTURE ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC LIBRARIAN

Butcher (1999) sums up the current role of the academic librarian of the future, for whom schools of library and information science are trying to provide an appropriate and relevant education in the swiftly changing present environment:

“Although much has changed in libraries in the last quarter century, the core of who we are and what we are remains the same. We continue to be a profession devoted to bringing users and information together as seamlessly as possible. Libraries have used technology to enhance and create services. They have recognized that changing expectations and lean budgets require organizations that call upon the talents of everyone. Librarians have become more engaged in teaching and research to serve the needs of students, faculty, and the profession better. Finally, librarians are crossing campus boundaries and entering wholeheartedly into the political process to insure that libraries have a voice in the redefinition of information access” (p. 353).

Thus, there are rapid changes in all types of libraries and the burgeoning of new technologies for librarians to learn. These changes, while increasing the knowledge base of graduate students to enter successfully into an academic library career, nevertheless remain rooted in the need to carry out the traditional librarian roles—though hopefully faster, cheaper, smarter, and more effectively. It is important to review the most significant of those roles and see how the new academic educational paradigms are affecting them from a library and information science education viewpoint.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT/MAINTENANCE

The traditional heart of the library has been, of course, its collections — from the time of the great Alexandrine Library of the Classical era, libraries have been, in essence, the repositories of learning and hence the materials through which that learning is transmitted. When those materials become literally ethereal, coming to the user electronically “through the ether” as the preferred method of delivery, will we continue to need collection development librarians at all in academic libraries? Although most conceptions of the emerging digital libraries of the future retain a key role for the information professional, some visionaries nevertheless question whether the typical librarian’s present functions will be necessary. Will material selection, currently a key part of the professional librarian’s role, continue to enjoy a place in the electronic environment in a fashion sufficiently analogous to the prominent role now occupied in the traditional print-on-paper oriented library?
Marketing Information Products and Services Through Digital Platforms: Tools and Skills
www.igi-global.com/chapter/marketing-information-products-and-services-through-digital-platforms/233993?camid=4v1a

Relevance of Web 2.0 for Library Services in Digital Era
www.igi-global.com/chapter/relevance-of-web-20-for-library-services-in-digital-era/234008?camid=4v1a