

# The Search for a Law Library Director\*

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*Professor Armstrong encourages search committees seeking to hire a new law library director to focus on the specific roles, skills, and attributes needed for the position in their own particular institution.*

¶1 In a recent issue of *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, Ray Maghroori and Charles Powers outline an intriguing strategy for hiring a new dean in an article called “How to Choose the Right Dean for Your University: Remembering the Five P’s of Deanship.”<sup>1</sup> They recommend searching for someone with a “specific set of skills” who can deal with “the particular challenges facing the campus at this time.”<sup>2</sup> The authors describe the desired skill sets of a dean in terms of “five P’s” (prophet, promoter, provider, politician, and police officer) and urge search committees to consider using this approach in their next dean search.

¶2 The “Five P’s”<sup>3</sup>—discussed in detail below—seem relevant to a wide range of leadership positions. Certainly the Maghroori and Powers approach could be useful to law schools looking for a new dean, but the framework could also be adapted to a search for a law library director. Of course, the hiring expectations for a new law dean differ from those in a library director search. But a search committee may find it both interesting and useful to consider some of these ideas when faced with the challenge of finding a new director for their law library.

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1. Ray Maghroori & Charles Powers, *How to Choose the Right Dean for Your University: Remembering the Five P’s of Deanship*, *CHANGE*, Mar.–Apr. 2004, at 52. Maghroori is vice president for academic affairs at Riverside Community College. He previously served as assistant dean, associate dean, interim dean, and dean at the University of California Riverside and San Francisco State University, where he was professor of management. Powers is professor of sociology at Santa Clara University.
2. *Id.* at 52.
3. Various alliterative phrases such as the “Five P’s” (or “Five C’s,” “Four R’s,” “Three D’s,” etc.) have been created to help explain a concept. Some examples include the “Five P’s of Marketing: Product, Price, Promotion, Place, and People”; “Five C’s of Bank Credit: Character, Capacity, Capital, Conditions, and Collateral”; “Five C’s of Cinematography: Camera Angles, Continuity, Cutting, Close-ups, and Composition”; and “Five P’s of Gardening: Planning, Planting, Protecting, Picking, and Preparing.” Dozens of variations exist, e.g., in marketing using only four P’s or using “packaging” instead of “people.” For an example in law, see Gregory M. Travaglio, *The UCC’s Three “R’s”: Rejection, Revocation, and (The Seller’s) Right to Cure*, 53 U. CIN. L. REV. 931 (1984).

## A Puzzling Process

¶3 Hiring a new law library director can be a surprisingly puzzling process. Fortunately, for many institutions, the search goes as planned and a fine new director is selected. But for others the search does not produce a good match, despite much time and effort devoted to the process. Some searches face unexpected difficulties and are extended after disappointing or unsuccessful first efforts. Other searches may be closed completely and then reposted at a later date.<sup>4</sup>

¶4 Why these mixed results? No doubt the circumstances differ from school to school. However, a number of factors may be involved. First, the library director position (and search) is “different” from other positions and searches at the law school. The search also tends to involve more people, each with various concerns and perspectives. Issues specifically relevant to staff, faculty, or administrators may be important to them, but of little concern to the other groups. In addition, many things must go right in a search for there to be success, while just one or two problems might spell failure.

¶5 Finally, rarely is there anyone on the search committee who has actually served in the role of library director. Although everyone is vaguely familiar with what the director does, the job duties are unique to that position and far more complex than meets the eye. Even someone who has regular contact with the director may be experiencing only one aspect of the position.<sup>5</sup> Thus there is *great* potential for differences in expectations, and all of these areas can contribute to the mixed results.

¶6 It should be noted here that nothing in these observations is meant to suggest that one thing or another causes a library director search to get off track.<sup>6</sup> Various factors have likely contributed to the noticeable number of recent searches that have been extended or reposted. But seeking out additional information early in the process and consulting with a wide range of individuals may help bring unexpected issues to light sooner. It would also help avoid costly extended or reposted searches—not just in monetary costs, but in the time and effort of dozens of individuals. Of course, carefully considering a library director’s potential responsibilities at that institution is a very important first piece to the puzzle.

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4. In the past few years reposted or extended library director searches have been conducted at a number of schools. Examples can be found in the American Association of Law Libraries Job Placement Hotline Archives, <http://www.aallnet.org/hotline/archives.asp> (last visited Jan. 16, 2006).
  5. While discussing the duties of a director, some may be reminded of the story about the elephant first explored through the darkness. One person experiences the trunk, one the tusk, one the leg, and so on. The various parts of the elephant only begin to become clear when each describes what they have experienced.
  6. Over the years, the author has filled nearly a dozen staff and professional positions and has participated in faculty hires. She fully recognizes that sometimes things just don’t work out in a search, despite everyone’s best efforts. For those situations it simply makes more sense to stop and start again.

## General Job Responsibilities

¶7 The general job duties of the law library director position differ significantly from other professional positions at the law school. Even at a smaller law school, the library director might supervise ten employees and be responsible for an \$800,000 budget. He or she might also oversee a 30,000-square-foot facility and a 300,000-volume collection of mixed media. Double or triple these numbers for larger schools. Inherently, no one else at the law school has this particular combination of duties.

¶8 To complicate matters, the duties and responsibilities of the library director's job vary widely from law school to law school. This includes some fairly fundamental things, such as whether the director teaches a class, manages the information technology department, holds a faculty tenure-track appointment,<sup>7</sup> engages in scholarship, participates in university-wide planning and initiatives, has budget responsibilities outside of the library, or does fund-raising.

¶9 To be as informed as possible, a search committee may wish to consider what academic law library directors actually do at various institutions. This might be especially useful if the institutions are similarly situated; for example, if both have large enrollments, are publicly funded, or are religiously affiliated. It may also help in better understanding external candidates who may have different backgrounds, experiences, and understandings about a director's role.

¶10 For example, consider the basic question of what the new director might be called. Some variation on "director of the law library" seems clear, but will the new person also be an "associate dean"? Currently approximately 25% to 30% of all sitting directors have "associate dean" or some similar designation as part of their titles.<sup>8</sup> This arrangement may or may not be suitable for a given institution, but a search committee should be aware that these kinds of differences exist.

¶11 Fortunately, to aid in this process, more has now been written on the topic of law library directors than there has been in the past.<sup>9</sup> A recent questionnaire,

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7. See SECTION OF LEGAL EDUC. & ADMISSION TO THE BAR, AM. BAR ASS'N, STANDARDS AND RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR APPROVAL OF LAW SCHOOLS 2004–2005, standard 603(d), at 46 (2004) [hereinafter ABA STANDARDS] ("Except in extraordinary circumstances, a law library director shall hold a law faculty appointment with security of faculty position."). Some institutions consider their views on this issue prior to bringing candidates on campus. Others explore it after interviews are completed. The issues involved in faculty status, scholarship, and tenure requirements are very important, but beyond the scope of this article.
  8. See Posting of Linda Ryan, ryanl@stjohns.edu, Law Library/IT Directors with Decanal Titles, to lawlibdir@lists.washlaw.edu (Nov. 18, 2004) (copy on file with author); Posting of A. Michael Beaird, ambeaird@ualr.edu, Director Dean List, to lawlibdir@lists.washlaw.edu (Jan. 18, 2006) (copy on file with author). For those directors who had the word "dean" in their titles, most were associate deans. Other titles included assistant dean, vice chancellor, vice president, associate provost, and senior associate dean.
  9. See, e.g., Carol Bredemeyer, *What Do Directors Do?* 96 LAW LIBR. J. 317, 2004 LAW LIBR. J. 20; Betsy McKenzie, *Just What Is It that Those Darned Law School Library Directors Do?* AALL SPECTRUM, Nov. 2001, at 8; Brian L. Baker, *Who Wants to Be the Boss? Strategies for Success as a Law Library Director*, AALL SPECTRUM, Mar. 2003, at 12; Nancy A. Armstrong, *Making the Quantum Leap: One Director's Experience*, TRENDS IN LAW LIBR. MGMT. & TECH., 2002, no. 3, at 4; 2004–05 Completed Research Grant Report, 97 LAW LIBR. J. 839, 2005 LAW LIBR. J. 50 (including report by researcher Kelly Browne on her study of the "emotional intelligence of law librarians," an interesting survey of law library positions, including directors).

completed by 64% of all academic law library directors, highlights their duties and responsibilities.<sup>10</sup> Reviewing these areas might provide useful text for the job announcement. It could also help the search committee set expectations and determine what types of skills the law school might consider looking for in applicants.

### Specific Expectations and Roles

¶12 Given the wide range of duties and expectations of a library director, a search committee should specifically consider what roles, *at their institution*, the new director might have. Maghroori and Powers note that when looking for a new dean, some institutions focus on a standardized profile even though it might not be relevant for the institution.<sup>11</sup> They suggest instead to focus on hiring someone for the *specific role* needed by the institution. Thus, a realistic assessment of local needs and expectations will help the search committee screen and select the best-qualified candidates.

¶13 What expectations might a specific law school have for its new director? The institution would naturally expect the director to oversee all library operations and have most of the general responsibilities noted earlier.<sup>12</sup> But other expectations such as “good teacher,” “colleague,” and “service-oriented” also come to mind. So do “budget-conscious,” “innovative,” and “team player,” depending on who is talking. In some cases, a school may want simply “whatever the incumbent was”—or was not.

¶14 Understandably, different kinds of expectations may come from the various sectors of the community. For example, the law school dean might expect the library director to participate in the mission and vision of the school, and to stay within the annual budget.<sup>13</sup> A faculty member may value a library director who ensures that needed resources become available promptly.<sup>14</sup> Some faculty might expect a colleague who will teach a class; others might not. Administrators may wish for someone who is cooperative and easy to work with. Library staff generally hope for a new boss who will be fair, communicate well, and treat them with respect. Students want the library and its leader to be responsive to their needs.

¶15 Of course, candidates often have their own specific understandings and expectations about the position, too. They may be aware of statistics comparing staff size, collection composition, and physical facilities, which help them better

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10. Bredemeyer, *supra* note 9, app. at 323–31.

11. Maghroori & Powers, *supra* note 1, at 52.

12. See *supra* ¶¶ 7–8. For an interesting article that proposes various methods for evaluating a director, see Roberta Studwell, *Evaluating Law Library Directors*, 91 LAW LIBR. J. 423 (1999).

13. For additional perspective on what deans want, see Special Feature, *The Law School Library Director of the Twenty-First Century: What Deans Think*, 95 LAW LIBR. J. 419 (2003).

14. For additional perspective on what faculty members want, see Special Feature, *Expectations of the Twenty-First-Century Law Library for the Support of Faculty Scholarship*, 96 LAW LIBR. J. 503 (2004).

understand the library and the director's role and challenges in that particular environment. A candidate may also be interested in specific professional development opportunities, such as having sufficient funding to support serving in leadership positions within a professional association. As with other jobs, individuals may also be keenly interested in salary and benefit packages, housing costs, the overall work environment, and how the job fits with stated or unstated personal priorities.

¶16 In addition, potential applicants may be very focused on specific issues that search committee members seldom think about, such as whether there is enough linear feet of shelving, adequate space for library operations, or a sustainable budget for library technology needs. There may also be unintended concerns raised by the wording of the job announcement, or other underlying issues that surface outside of the official process.

¶17 In the current environment, institutions are accustomed to large numbers of highly qualified applicants in faculty searches. By contrast, some past searches for law librarian positions have not drawn a large pool of applicants. For a number of recent openings, potential candidates were contacted and invited to apply.<sup>15</sup> Search committees may consider this approach if appropriate for their situation.

¶18 For greater insights into some of these issues, the library director search committee might also wish to consider the perspective of someone in the academic law library community. Occasionally a law school may hire a sitting academic law library director to serve as a consultant for their search. Particularly for a newer law school, the consultant may take an active role within the law library community by providing information about the school and its library director opportunity.<sup>16</sup> Or the consultant might work on a confidential basis, directly with the dean, search committee, or both, to provide information or help address relevant issues in a particularly challenging search.<sup>17</sup>

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15. This aspect of hiring a library director is actually more similar to a dean search rather than other faculty searches. Other helpful ideas noted in articles about conducting a law school dean search might also be applied to the library director search. See, e.g., R. Lawrence Dessem, *Unsolicited Advice to Law School Dean Search Committees*, 34 U. Tol. L. Rev. 55 (2002); Victor L. Streib, *Law Deanships: Must They Be Nasty, Brutish, and Short?* 44 J. Legal Educ. 116 (1994).

16. The following e-mail message clearly illustrates this kind of arrangement. It was posted to the academic law library director discussion list by a director who was helping a new law school.

Dear colleagues, [X] College of Law, an up and coming . . . law school . . . will be conducting preliminary interviews for a new Law Library Director, during the AALL, this July. [X]'s law school . . . will be reviewed for provisional accreditation by the ABA. . . . It's off to a great start with a strong faculty and student body and a rapidly developing law library. A new building also is in the works. . . . I am attaching a preliminary draft of the position description. . . . I will be assisting Dean [A] . . . and interview prospective candidates at the AALL. If you have an interest in this position or would like to nominate someone, please contact me at your earliest convenience. I will be collecting a letter of application, together with a current vita and references from those interested in being interviewed at the AALL. Also, feel free to contact Dean [A], at [X] College of Law. . . .

17. Consultants can offer advice in a wide range of areas. Examples include the evaluation of library services and personnel, helping a new school seek provisional ABA accreditation, evaluating the school's information technology or proposed renovations plans, or even conducting a "pre-ABA inspection" and evaluation prior to the official ABA visit.

¶19 Finally, for a number of law schools it may have been a very long time since they last looked for a director—perhaps fifteen, twenty, or even twenty-five years ago. Approximately 20% to 30% of all U.S. law school library directors have served in the position at their law school for fifteen years or more.<sup>18</sup> As many current library directors near retirement age, their law schools may soon be searching for replacements.<sup>19</sup> These transitions have already begun—fifteen new law library directors were named during 2005.<sup>20</sup> And as sometimes happens when one person has been in a position for many years, both the person and his or her duties may have become totally integrated into the woven fabric of the community. It can be quite a challenge to visualize where the hole will be when the person leaves, and yet another challenge to figure out what is needed to fill it.

¶20 No matter how the committee decides to proceed, it should keep its focus on hiring someone for the *specific role* needed by the institution. For the greatest likelihood of success, search committees should carefully examine true institutional needs, focus on appropriate goals for the position, and avoid distractions. This will help them really connect with those candidates who have the talents, skills, experience, and expertise that best match the needs of their school. Using the ideas captured in the five P's may also help in this process.

### The Five P's

¶21 What are the “Five P's of Deanship,” as outlined by Maghroori and Powers? Simply put, they are prophet, promoter, provider, politician, and police officer.<sup>21</sup> In the following section, each P is discussed in context, with some thoughts about how the idea might be useful in a search for an academic law library director. It should be noted that the Maghroori and Powers strategy assumes that other standard profile considerations important to an institution could be discussed in the initial selection or screening stages of the search,<sup>22</sup> but in the end careful consideration<sup>23</sup> of the “Five P's” should help produce the best possible match for the institution.

18. This percentage is always changing as individuals retire or change positions. One current source for this number is a master e-mail list, compiled by the list owner of the academic law library director electronic discussion list, which is distributed to directors annually for review and which includes the year in which the current director's position started. It suggests an even higher percentage—about 31%. See Posting of John E. Christensen, john.christensen@washburn.edu, U.S. Law School Library Directors E-Mail Directory (version 20), to lawlibdir@lists.washlaw.edu (Oct. 21, 2005) (copy on file with author).

19. An informal show of hands at the academic law library directors' breakfast during the 2004 AALL Annual Meeting indicated that the vast majority of those present would be retiring in the next five to ten years. There were about ninety current academic law library directors present at that meeting, which suggests that at least forty or fifty directors would be retiring in the next decade—forecasting many law library director searches during this time.

20. See Posting of John E. Christensen, *supra* note 18.

21. Maghroori & Powers, *supra* note 1, at 53.

22. They note that “a minimum level of scholarship or administrative service might be useful as prerequisites, but making a final selection on the basis of who possesses the minimum prerequisite qualifications in greatest abundance is simply no way to run an organization.” *Id.* at 52.

23. Maghroori and Powers's ideas about how to prioritize each P role are noted in the conclusion of this piece. See *infra* ¶ 53.

### *Prophet*

“A dean [director] often must be a person with a vision, a kind of *prophet* with clear ideas for leading the college [library] to the Promised Land.”—Ray Maghroori and Charles Powers<sup>24</sup>

¶22 Maghroori and Powers note that “when a college needs to reinvent itself, or move into a new direction, being a prophet may be a new dean’s central responsibility.”<sup>25</sup> In a law school seeking to reinvent itself, or in a new school just starting up, the law library may also need to move in a specific direction. Where does the library need to be in five years? Where *might* it be in ten years? The library director needs to share the vision of the law school and assure that the library’s actions support these goals.

¶23 A law school may also wish to find a director who can move the organization forward in other areas, such as supporting specific programs or new initiatives. This may include the increased use of information technology. For many years libraries have been facing complex issues related to electronic information resources, and the director can often help provide vision and innovation in this area. The law school may also be seeking someone who can add new services or change past practices to better benefit the overall law school community.

¶24 By contrast, if the library has a long-standing tradition of excellence and is already providing first-rate services, instituting major changes may not be needed or desired. This could be true even in an institution that is otherwise trying to reinvent itself. Indeed, bringing in someone with an agenda of major changes may disrupt successful relationships, diminish resources, and cause morale problems. As Maghroori and Powers write, where excellence is already established, “the university may want to look for an individual who is more a doer than a dreamer. . . . [A] university should not be looking for a prophet unless it is willing to accept real change.”<sup>26</sup>

¶25 Finally, if an institution needs a “doer,” it may also wish to explore *how* their candidates get things done. Successful project management usually involves successful personnel management. The new director can have all the vision in the world, but if he or she cannot motivate people to be a part of that vision, it may be significantly harder, and take significantly longer, to make that vision a reality.

### *Promoter*

“Of course, it is never enough for a dean [director] to be a prophet. A dean [director] must be a *promoter*, doing PR work on campus, in the community, with . . . various outside

24. Maghroori & Powers, *supra* note 1, at 53. The words [director] and [library] are noted in brackets after the words “dean” and “college” so this alternate idea can be visualized more easily in the original text from Maghroori and Powers’s article. This convention is followed *infra* text accompanying notes 27, 33, 36, 40.

25. *Id.*

26. *Id.* at 54. It is also possible that some balance of these two roles—the doer and the dreamer—might be needed. For example, library operations may be functioning well now, but planning for future space might need to occur at the same time.

agencies and constituencies. A good dean [director] understands brand marketing. But this aspect of the job differs from place to place.”—Ray Maghroori and Charles Powers<sup>27</sup>

¶26 Law librarians do more public relations work than most people realize. Depending on the size and practices of the institution, the library director may play a direct role as a promoter, working on public relations or fund-raising campaigns. Of course, the director must also ensure excellent substance—for instance, in information resources and services—along with the effective marketing of such services.

¶27 The role that Maghroori and Powers describe is more external, performed outside the library (although this role exists for internal relationships, too). Examples of the external role include reaching out to other units on campus, working on campuswide planning projects, offering library services to local law firms, partnering with others on new initiatives, or making significant contact with alumni and potential donors.

¶28 If the law school has community service as part of its mission, this would likely include a role for the library. The library and its services may be quite important to the local bench and bar, although this varies by location. In some environments, the law library may specifically reach out to lawyers and judges by providing access to relevant services, collections, or facilities.<sup>28</sup> Many times no one else at the law school has the chance to talk to the visitors or alumni who stop by to use the library at night or on the weekend. How well the library director can represent the institution, using whatever values are important to that institution, may be a major consideration if this role will be a high priority.

¶29 Good public relations work not only helps support research and scholarship, but it also helps generate good will toward the entire institution. Promoting and informing others about the library’s services and needs helps keep the library at the heart of the educational mission of the school and goes far in ensuring continued funding.<sup>29</sup> For example, directors may need to review and clarify library budget issues with a library committee, dean, or others in administration. Some of this work could also be characterized as outreach, as creating awareness, or simply

27. *Id.*

28. Services may be offered to a legal community that extends for hundreds of miles. *See, e.g.* Thormodsgard Law Library, Univ. of N.D., Attorney Services, <http://www.law.und.nodak.edu/LegalResearch/attserv.php> (last visited Jan. 16, 2006) (“We’re your law library. The Attorney Services Program makes all of the resources at the Thormodsgard Law Library available to attorneys in North Dakota and northern Minnesota.”). In a major urban area, though, access to library services and facilities may need to be limited to ensure that they are available for students and faculty. *See, e.g.*, Georgetown Law Library, Georgetown Univ. Law Ctr., Public Patron Program, [http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/public\\_portal/patron\\_program.cfm](http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/public_portal/patron_program.cfm) (last visited Jan. 16, 2006) (“Public Patrons have access to the on-site collection and have the opportunity to obtain on-site reference assistance. Public Patrons are not eligible to use the Computer Learning Center or the Student Computer Lab, and LEXIS and WESTLAW access is not available.”).

29. For more information on marketing in libraries, see Kay Todd, *The Leader as Marketer*, in *LEADERSHIP ROLES FOR LIBRARIANS* 117 (Herbert E. Cihak & Joan S. Howland eds., 2002).

as education rather than as “promotion,” but the ability to convey these messages in an effective and positive manner should not be underestimated.

¶30 Finally, although some might think of “branding” solely in the context of businesses, this concept does also exist in the world of higher education and libraries. Brand marketing can be applied to institutional logos, signage, publications, programs, or facilities.<sup>30</sup> Prospective students, faculty candidates, alumni, and other visitors may all form impressions about the institution from interactions with library staff, from their use of services, and from the physical or virtual/Web presence.<sup>31</sup> For some schools this issue and role might be low priority. At others, branding issues are taken very seriously.<sup>32</sup> Seeking a good match between the institutional culture and its candidates can be helpful. Exploring the issue may unearth a candidate’s views in related areas that may also be of importance to the institution.

### *Provider*

“A successful dean [director] must be a *provider* of resources.”—*Ray Maghroori and Charles Powers*<sup>33</sup>

¶31 In the context of the “Five P’s of Deanship,” the term “resources” refers primarily to dollars. Providing financial resources is indeed a very high priority for most deans.<sup>34</sup> Some library directors may also be involved in development work at their institutions, particularly when there are plans for a capital campaign or new building. There may be funding opportunities within the library, such as named spaces or endowed book funds. Some directors may be involved in grant applications or fee-based initiatives; all work on budget issues, often with a goal of securing increases or reallocations in budget lines. Library directors also are usually involved in setting or recommending salaries and raises for staff.

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30. See, e.g., Sejan Yun, *Branding Helped to Promote Our Library and Its Technology*, COMPUTERS IN LIBR., May 2004, at 18 (describing successful “identity program” developed for the Saint Paul (Minn.) Public Library, which included RFPs with design firms and resulted in new logos, new and revised publications, a new Web site, and increased use of newly reopened central library); Susan Fowler, *Even Law Libraries Need a Brand: How to Identify Your Library’s Brand and Use It to Its Full Potential*, AALL SPECTRUM, Feb. 2006, at 10.
  31. The author recently visited a new law school which very successfully incorporated an element of the university seal into many areas of its new building, including on all door signage, on the backs of folding chairs set up for special events, and on library carrel panels. This unifying element was also present on the school’s Web site and its publications.
  32. One dean described the branding issue this way: “As complicated as our external marketing plan has become, communicating our brand must start from within. The chief supporters of a school’s brand are the people associated with it. . . . [A]pplicants who call our Admissions Office and hear a friendly voice will form a good opinion of us. This is true of the way the Library greets patrons and the Career Services Office hosts visiting employers. . . . A truly successful brand is about relationships.” John H. Garvey, Letter from the Dean, Boston College Law School (Spring 2005) (copy on file with author).
  33. Maghroori & Powers, *supra* note 1, at 54.
  34. See, e.g., Patrick J. Borchers, *Budgets*, 35 U. TOL. L. REV. 19 (2003); Kenneth C. Randall, *The Dean as Fundraiser*, 33 U. TOL. L. REV. 139 (2001); Steven R. Smith, *The Dean and the Budget: Not “Just a Bunch of Damn Numbers,”* 33 U. TOL. L. REV. 203 (2001).

¶32 But this isn't the only "provider" role a director might have. Library directors need to provide nonmonetary resources, in one form or another, so that the library can function. At a minimum, directors need to provide expertise, time, space, equipment, and training resources to their staff so that library work can get done. In turn, the library needs to provide information resources and related services to researchers so scholarship can flourish. This role is extraordinarily important, because the law library must "provide the appropriate range and depth of reference, bibliographic, and other services to meet the needs of the law school's teaching, research, and service programs."<sup>35</sup> Of course, specific resources are also needed for students, to effectively support their studies.

¶33 What this means operationally varies depending on the specific institution. A director closely involved with law school information technology issues might be responsible for selecting, ordering, and funding new computer equipment, such as laptops for the admissions office or technology for the classroom. Another library director might serve on a campuswide committee addressing compensation or benefit issues for hourly and salaried staff. Most directors must carefully focus on providing adequate space resources for functions, services, staff, and collections. In short, the law school should seek a candidate who can be comfortable with whatever provider role is realistically needed by the institution.

### *Politician*

"[A] dean [director] must also be a *politician*. A dean [director] is constantly arbitrating disputes, deciding on distribution of resources, negotiating compromises, and legislating actions."—Ray Maghroori and Charles Powers<sup>36</sup>

¶34 These words truly describe a "typical day" for many law library directors. How does the library director decide where and when to allocate resources? All resources—time, staff, space, or dollars—should be managed and directed through a fair, realistic, and efficient process. Many days this is far easier said than done.

¶35 The phrase "deciding on distribution of resources" deserves a closer look. The library director will make many tough decisions involving policies, staffing, and money, and he or she must act with integrity. Learning more about a candidate's approach toward decision making could provide insights into his or her management style, character, and philosophy of service.

¶36 What kinds of issues come up in this particular P role? The library director may need to make arrangements for a new service, fund two unexpected equipment needs, report on a difficult matter in a meeting, and seek compromise on a space issue—all before lunch. The director also needs to handle all of these areas with the budget in mind, since overspending to support one area can lead to unpleasant consequences for other areas. In addition, a law library director

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35. ABA STANDARDS, *supra* note 7, standard 605, at 46 (emphasis added).

36. Maghroori & Powers, *supra* note 1, at 54.

may also hold leadership roles on campus or in professional organizations and use these “politician” skills to help make policy changes on a local, regional, or national level.

¶37 Deans, faculty, students, and staff need the director to respond to pressing needs when there is little time for extensive analysis or investigation. The director must make good decisions quickly; timeliness and good judgment are crucial. When should that squeaky wheel get the highest priority? Must we connect every dot before making a decision and moving on? The answer may be “it depends.”<sup>37</sup> Clearly there are no perfect answers to these issues, but a dialogue on this topic with candidates should prove useful.

¶38 Finally, the importance of seeking someone with the ability to negotiate compromises cannot be overstated. Routinely the library director must “get to yes,”<sup>38</sup> seeing beyond the position taken by the parties and discerning the true, underlying interests involved. This is a vitally important skill no matter what other duties, expectations, or component parts of the “Five P’s” the search committee might take under consideration. It is also very important in relations with law school administration, with faculty, with library staff, and with students. As Maghroori and Powers note, “[d]eans rarely work with black-and-white issues. Instead, they are forced to wade into murky water every day. For an administrator, everything is a compromise.”<sup>39</sup>

### *Police Officer*

“[E]very dean [director] . . . has to spend some time being a *police officer*. That is, the dean [director] needs to spend a certain amount of time looking for bad guys: people who violate the university’s written or unwritten rules and procedures, deflect programs from achieving their goals, or generally make life miserable for almost everyone around them.”—*Ray Maghroori and Charles Powers*<sup>40</sup>

¶39 The term “police officer” used in this context may at first seem unusual, but the underlying concept will ring true to those familiar with this role. Deans probably don’t relish this role; most library directors don’t, either. However, like it or not, setting the tone for keeping the peace is part of the job.

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37. See, e.g., Joan S. Howland, *The Leader as Leader*, in LEADERSHIP ROLES FOR LIBRARIANS, *supra* note 29, at 1, 11–17. The following short statement by a business leader also captures this idea. In a recent interview, Travelocity CEO Michelle Peluso described her decision-making process this way: “Quickly. I trust my instincts. . . . [W]hen you’re in the 40 to . . . 60 to 80 percent comfort range, decide to move on. . . . You need to debate pros and cons, but, . . . in some cases, the last piece of analysis, the last piece of data isn’t always necessary. . . . Indecision is paralysis.” *Morning Edition: Decision Makers: Travelocity CEO* (NPR radio broadcast Apr. 14, 2005), available at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4599884>.

38. See generally ROGER FISHER & WILLIAM URY, *GETTING TO YES: NEGOTIATING AGREEMENT WITHOUT GIVING IN* (2d ed. 1991); WILLIAM URY, *GETTING PAST NO: NEGOTIATING YOUR WAY FROM CONFRONTATION TO COOPERATION* (rev. ed. 1993); ROBERT H. MNOOKIN, *BEYOND WINNING: NEGOTIATING TO CREATE VALUE IN DEALS AND DISPUTES* (2000).

39. Maghroori & Powers, *supra* note 1, at 53.

40. *Id.* at 54.

¶40 Often the “bad guys” just show up; no one has to seek them out. Their actions are up-front and obvious. By contrast, some individual or group motives are so cleverly hidden that determined investigations need to take place to discover what is really going on. Either way, the director has to make sure that people are following rules, not deflecting programs or goals, and not disrupting the work of others.

¶41 Complicating matters is the reality that the library may have a long-term, service-oriented relationship with the same people connected to such problems. For example, students have been known to break library rules, and those matters need to be addressed. Yet the same student may need help at the reference desk an hour later—a service request that must be honored. Employees can abuse sick time or argue over unexpected matters, but they are, of course, vital to ongoing operational work. And as Maghroori and Powers note, even faculty members can contribute to this problem: “Faculty members, like other human beings, are often quite unaware of how their actions appear to others, affect others, or are portrayed by others.”<sup>41</sup>

¶42 The ability to deal fairly and promptly with these kinds of problems is very important, whether the director does this work in person, as often happens at smaller schools, or through his or her respected department heads, which is likely at larger schools. If this role is not handled well, it has the potential to be disruptive to others, cause lower productivity, or create serious morale problems. Even if these duties are delegated, on a library matter the issue ultimately remains part of the director’s responsibility.

¶43 Maghroori and Powers suggest that the person in this police officer role should “help alert people to what is and is not acceptable in the local community,” delivered, it is hoped, with enough sensitivity to know whether “to be subtle or blunt in order to communicate clearly and constructively.”<sup>42</sup> No doubt all library directors have had the experience of grabbing some difficult bull by the horns, looking deep into its fire red eyes, and *finally* gaining control over a tough situation. How often this sort of thing comes up might be discussed openly with candidates, as some environments are fairly peaceful and others are not.

¶44 Finally, the idea behind this P role can often be seen in the area of personnel administration. The widest range of issues can arise when considering staff reorganizations, performance reviews, contract renewals, and even certain day-to-day matters, especially in environments that have civil service units or unionized staff. Communicating expectations to people who are not doing what is needed or expected, or who are “making life miserable” for others, is especially difficult but absolutely essential. Unfortunately, to make success in this role even harder, there

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41. *Id.*

42. *Id.*

can be unpleasant consequences, such as a classic “bad reaction” or even a formal “grievance.” Search committees at institutions with a highly specialized personnel infrastructure, such as staff in bargaining units or librarians in continuing appointment or tenure-track positions, should carefully examine a director candidate’s views in these areas.<sup>43</sup>

### *An Additional “P”—Polyglot?*

¶45 One last P might be added to Maghroori and Power’s list of roles: *polyglot*. I’m not referring to someone who speaks several foreign languages, although that could certainly be helpful.<sup>44</sup> Rather, what is meant is a person who can understand and effectively communicate with the various groups a director works with, using the specific terminology or “language” appropriate to each.<sup>45</sup>

¶46 This skill is vitally important because the library director must be able to communicate with and understand the needs of a wide range of people. This routinely includes faculty, librarians, staff, law school and university administrators, technology professionals, alumni, and students. Also on the list are architects, trustees, colleagues from other institutions, attorneys and businesspeople from the community, campus tradespeople, sales representatives, pro se patrons, other members of the general public, and anyone else connected to a specific library service or initiative (i.e., just about anyone). Being able to communicate with these disparate groups, using the various “language” or terminology appropriate to their issues will make the director more successful in his or her position.

¶47 What “languages” do these various groups speak? Perhaps a few examples might better explain this idea. Conversations with librarians often involve technical jargon essential to library operations. Terms like “OCLC,”<sup>46</sup> “authority control,” and “SuDocs number” come to mind, but such words and phrases are rarely used or heard outside the library. Wage and hour staff may use the terminology of specialized work rules or benefits. In a faculty office, impassioned conversations about court cases and substantive law involve very precise legal language. In the dean’s office, an important conversation about operating or capital budgets might be spoken in the language of university fiscal procedures.

¶48 And in the world of information technology, new terms with new meanings enter the vocabulary on a daily basis. In fall 2004, the phrase “Service Pack

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43. One method to consider is to create a hypothetical situation and ask all the candidates how they might handle it. Although not a perfect measuring device, some answers might indicate a greater likelihood of comfort and effectiveness in that institution’s environment.

44. Foreign language skills can help with visiting international scholars, LLM students, researching foreign law, and pro se patrons.

45. It should be noted that the author has no expertise in foreign language studies. She uses the words “polyglot” and “language” very informally, simply to convey a general concept such as those found in the other P roles previously described.

46. The OCLC Online Computer Library Center is a bibliographic utility used by libraries. OCLC produces the WorldCat online catalog and provides many services to libraries, including custom cataloging and a widely used interlibrary loan resource sharing system.

2<sup>7</sup> was used regularly in conversations. It was not used simply to describe the new Microsoft update which was needed for student laptops. The phrase took on extra meaning—with expressions of concern, followed by frowns and questions—mainly because it represented a new, difficult, and pressing technology problem that many law library directors had to cope with. It was heard in technology orientation sessions for new students and in the daily talk of our IT staff. Three years later this phrase (and issue) may seem like quaint ancient history and be out of usage completely, but something new will certainly be in its place.

¶49 Of course, no new library director will know all the jargon or completely understand all of the issues for every possible group. Still, he or she should understand and be comfortable with as many as possible, at least to whatever level is required *for that particular position*. Some languages surely will be comfortable, as for a native speaker. Others may be more challenging. To be effective, the new director should be able to communicate, at some level, with most groups, no matter which language they are speaking.<sup>48</sup>

¶50 Finally, on a related note, directors need to be sensitive to the preferred methods of communication found at an institution. Is there an e-mail culture or an expectation of person-to-person communications? Do key individuals have preferences about communications? The dean may prefer (or dislike) e-mail, while administrative matters may call for written memos (or phone calls). Student contact may yield the best results if done in person (or via e-mail). Considering the best way to deliver a particular message is part of being an effective communicator.

¶51 Search committees may wish to consider whether the director candidate might be an effective polyglot at their institution. Creating an interview process that does not focus on just one aspect of the job and that includes a wide range of people in the process will naturally generate questions for the candidate in some of these “languages.” But very few candidates will be “fluent” in all languages, and weakness in one may not be a serious problem if strengths in others are valued more by the institution. It may also be helpful to inquire about a candidate’s methods of communication. Candidates who insist on using e-mail

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47. Service Packs are updates released by Microsoft with enhancements, changes, and other “fixes” needed to correct known problems. Downloading Service Pack 2 (SP2)—part of a package we normally *encourage* students to download to protect them from viruses, hackers, and worms—actually created new problems for laptop users, including blocking Norton anti-virus and freezing other important functions. Microsoft maintains on its Web site ([www.support.microsoft.com](http://www.support.microsoft.com)) a long list of programs that may “behave differently” after you install Windows XP Service Pack 2. As one expert noted: “Give me a choice between chopping onions and installing Service Pack 2 for Windows XP, and I’ll be in the kitchen in a nanosecond—either way I’ll be crying. I finally managed the upgrade, but not without a few bumps that I’ll show you how to avoid.” Steve Bass, *Your XP Service Pack 2 Survival Guide*, PC WORLD, Jan. 2005, at 45, 45.

48. Similar ideas have also been expressed in previous writings about the roles and duties of law deans. *E.g.*, Streib, *supra* note 15, at 123 (“[T]he law dean’s task may be to translate for all concerned between two fairly different worlds. This need for translation and cooperation is also growing in the current era. . .”).

in a person-to-person environment, or who prefer casual conversations at a more formal institution, may simply not be as effective in the job.

¶52 Finally, Maghroori and Powers note that some deans have been hired into their second deanship with a presumption that they would know the job, but in the end they did not adapt well to the new institution's organizational culture.<sup>49</sup> This is, I think, a variation on the idea of being a polyglot—i.e., not being able to get a sense of the new place, understand the constituent groups, or “speak their language.” And it certainly might apply to library directors, particularly if the personnel, administrative or organizational structure, or director's role are unexpectedly different. Just as with a dean search, a candidate may be a fine match for an institution, even if he or she has never held that position before, as compared to someone else who has held the position but can't successfully make this particular transition. All of these areas are worth exploring in the interview.

### Conclusion

¶53 A search committee looking to fill a law library director position might benefit from a variety of search strategies, including those discussed in the “five P's,” to help them find the best match for their institution. Maghroori and Powers suggest rank ordering the “five P's relative to the institution's needs,” and asking candidates to do the same.<sup>50</sup> They urge search committees to generate conversations about those roles and to consider a candidate's comfort in them.<sup>51</sup> All of this may help focus attention on the specific skills most needed for a position.

¶54 Once hired, both deans and directors will oversee complex organizations and manage significant budgets. Both must be leaders for their institutions. To be effective, both must be able to use good judgment as they navigate their way through difficult policy and personnel issues. Searches that focus on the specific skills needed *for that particular institution* should produce, after much time and effort, the desired result—a good match and a fine new director for the law library.

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49. Maghroori & Powers, *supra* note 1, at 52.

50. *Id.* at 54.

51. *Id.*