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Book Review

Mistakes in Academic Library Management: Grievous Errors and How to Avoid Them

Margaret Gregor

Mistakes in Academic Library Management: Grievous Errors and How to Avoid Them. Ed. Jack E. Fritts, Jr. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2009. 132p. alk. paper, \$50 (ISBN 9780810867444). LC2009-016939.

This concise collection of essays, each written by an experienced library administrator, presents ten management mistakes commonly made by supervisors working in academic libraries. The contributors describe errors made in communication, project management, staffing, knowledge management, program planning, change management, and developing power and influence in the campus arena. Solutions are presented to help managers avoid these pitfalls. In his introduction to this volume, editor Jack Fritts states that the purpose of this book is "... to offer ideas and suggestions to help others avoid the snares some of us have already fallen into." He stresses that good communication skills are vital to the success of an effective administrator, a theme that links the essays together.

Each chapter begins with a scenario that illustrates a managerial miscalculation. This stratagem sets the stage for the theory and advice that is presented in the body of the essay. Since this book is designed to be a practical guide, the authors concentrate on the presentation of solutions that might serve to resolve the scenario effectively. Each solution is contrasted to the inappropriate strategies used within the case study. In some essays, the suggestions are backed by a brief explanation of related management theory. References are provided so that readers can refer to more theoretical works on the topic.

Unfortunately, the essays are inconsistent in quality. "Keeping Your Library on the Right (Correct) Side of Campus Politics" and "Developing Power and Influence as a Library Manager" would have benefitted from the addition of concrete examples and more theoretical material. Those chapters provide so little information that they would be of minimal use to a new administrator or to a staff member seeking to understand the political environment of a college campus. Several thought-provoking chapters balance these deficiencies, however. Frank Cervone provides an excellent description of effective project management, and Luanne DeGreve's discussion of the management of explicit and tacit institutional knowledge is informative. Additionally, Kathleen Walsh's enthusiastic essay makes a clear distinction between management and leadership, while emphasizing the need for leadership in today's rapidly changing digital environment. Harvey Gover's essay on "Knowing the Library User" is succinct and well written. New administrators would benefit especially from reading these sections. Since each chapter stands alone and deals with a unique management issue, the reader can select individual essays to peruse and ignore those that are less helpful.

The title implies that this guidebook is written solely for academic library managers, but some of the chapters have application to administration in other types of libraries. For example, Anne Marie Casey's chapter on communication, Luann DeGreve's chapter on corporate culture, and Kathleen Walsh's leadership essay could serve as valuable resources for any library administrator or staff member. It is unfortunate that the title may deter public, special, and school librarians from exploring the contents of this volume.

Experienced administrators may wish to read *Mistakes in Academic Library Management* to review management strategies useful for handling specific situations. New administrators may wish to read selected essays to gain a better understanding of library culture and to learn how to avoid some of the hazards caused by poor communication and inadequate planning. However, because of its inconsistencies, *Mistakes in Academic Library Management* is an optional purchase for library management collections.