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Introduction

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Introduction

Leadership is not a destination, it is a journey. Good leaders develop the skills they need for success throughout their careers. This is why librarians, dedicated to the concept of life-long learning, can be such good leaders in many aspects of their lives.

In this issue of *Oregon Library Association Quarterly*, we have five library leaders who share aspects of their journeys with us. Four are relatively new library directors and one a two-time interim director. Some were promoted from within; some came from outside their organizations. They represent a variety of library types, backgrounds, generations, and experiences. What they have in common is a passion for helping their respective libraries be the best that they can be.

Perhaps the dominant theme of their very different experiences is that of balance. A good leader needs to balance a clear view of the big picture with the appropriate attention to detail that ensures things don't crash and burn. Clear, effective communication must be weighed against required confidentiality and good timing. Confidence in oneself and one's talents butts up against the insecurity that is natural with taking on a new role. Each of these five talented individuals shares the ways that they try to strike these and other balances as they succeed in learning and accomplishing their roles as directors.

Some leaders actively strive for positions of authority, building the skills they believe they will need for success. Others are approached to take on leadership roles when the need arises and their talents are recognized. Whatever the case, being successful when the opportunity arises requires flexibility, determination, a collaborative spirit, and an understanding that the world we live in is in constant flux.

There is no road map for the leadership journey. Continuing along its path is more the effort of painting a picture than laying a road. The pictures these five individuals provide for this issue come together to provide a compelling mosaic of inspiration and experience. We hope you will enjoy them and learn something about where your personal journey may take you.

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