

SLO#7: The Student Applies Advocacy, Marketing, and Communication Principles for Entrepreneurial Leadership

While a library is fast becoming a place of social interaction and exchange of ideas that is equivalent to other places like a park or arcade, it is still a business at its core. Just like any other business in the world, the library needs money in order to keep fulfilling the role that it was created for. In order to acquire that money, it needs to get people to come and make use of their collections and services. After all, what good is a product if the people you want it to appeal to are not using it? However, how does one even go about getting people to use your product? The answer is quite simple.

The answer is to put your product, as well as the organization that you work for, out there for your audience to see. How can they put your product to use if they don't even know if it exists? That's where advocacy, marketing, and communication come into play. All of these things come together to form one of the most important responsibilities that a librarian has to fulfill, which is to constantly keep the library's collections in the spotlight. Throughout my time in UNCG's masters program, I have gradually come to understand the sheer amount of importance that outreach efforts have for libraries. It is what provides the enthusiastic, charismatic, voice of the library that opens the eyes of both the user and third-party organizations to the benefits that their collections can bring them. Outreach is all about advocating, marketing, and communicating the role that a library's collections can play in helping others transform their visions into reality. In some of my classes that emphasized this importance, I learned that if I want to become a successful librarian, I would need to master the art of reaching out to multiple audiences and collaborate with them in the interest of helping our local community as a whole.

When I think of advocating, marketing, and communication principles, one of the first things my mind goes to is the sprawling world of social media. While the land of highlights does keep everybody's eyes glued to their phones, it does have a lot of uses that all libraries should take full advantage of. I was introduced to the endless possibilities that social media offers in my Emerging Technology Trends class. This class stressed the fact that social media can be a major marketing boon for libraries, which I now strongly believe in. Being tasked with evaluating a library's social media presence, I got to explore the different tools and strategies that the organization uses to promote the valuable collections that call it home. In an age where mankind is quickly stepping over the threshold into the digital realm, constantly strengthening your organization's presence on social media is critical to success. In fact, taking full advantage of the resources that the digital realm offers is critical to achieving this learning objective. If I take away something from completing this particular assignment, it would be that. Overall, Emerging Technology Trends has taught me that making full use of digital tools like social media is key to exercising excellent marketing principles.

Even though marketing will get patrons to come through those double doors to see the library's collections for themselves, it is not solely going to answer their prayers. As the saying goes, "teamwork makes the dream work." As I recently learned, most libraries acquire the funding they need by requesting grants from organizations that they

believe could benefit from their collections and services. I acquired this critical knowledge from my Archival Management course, which I feel taught me a lot about the art of AMC (Advocacy, Marketing, and Communication). For me, this class practically symbolizes this learning objective as a whole. In the world of archiving, you have to constantly advocate, market, and communicate the archive's collections in order to achieve both grants and collection visibility for the department as a whole. Not only does an archivist have to do that, but they must always be looking for new opportunities to grow their archival department as well. Those opportunities are going to be found in the relationships that not just archives can forge, but also libraries can forge as well with their fellow businesses.

Speaking of working with fellow businesses, Archival Management also got me acquainted with the different ways libraries use outreach programs to acquire funds and visibility. From exhibitions to fundraisers to even sending ambassadors across the country, libraries make use of multiple events in regards to finding new opportunities to get into the spotlight and grow. One of the assignments that I completed for my archive class involved writing up a plan for promoting the collections of my chosen archives, which for me was the National Archives of Japan. I chose that particular archives, because I believe it is unique, which is something that you would want promote to your targeted audience. Looking back on this assignment now, I believe I have come to the conclusion that the key to entrepreneurial success is to constantly put your library out there by promoting the unique quirks, identities, memories, and personalities that make up your collections. Making full use of your library's differences is how you exercise great AMC skills to create strong business relationships that will lead you to success.

It will also lead the information field and your library's community to success as well. By advocating your library's differences, you also make your society aware of the valuable tools and knowledge that they can use to help its residents come together as a strong community. I recently learned this valuable lesson when I was conducting research on the North Carolina Digital Heritage Center for my Digital Libraries class. The goal of that particular digital library was to make all North Carolinians aware of their rich, diverse culture and use it to help them come together as one strong U.S. state. This is an excellent example of using AMC skills to help your library's community discover the hidden gems that are right on their doorstep and help them utilize these gems to help them achieve growth and success.

All of the past assignments that I have mentioned up to this point are just a few of the countless ways that librarian professionals can use to help advocate, market, and communicate the resources, services, and history that both their library and community possess. We can create collections, master the latest in information technology, and create all the information services that we want. However, all of that will be for nothing if we don't promote the resources and services that we already have. These principles will allow the library to form everlasting relations with businesses that will give the support they need for success. As the learning objective says, you have to think like an entrepreneur and always strive to look for new ways to reach the next level. An entrepreneur is always looking to make their business better tomorrow than what it is

today. That is what a librarian is all about as well. That is how I, Gavin Nelson, will go the distance in not just my archival career, but in my library career in general as well.

Artifacts

LIS 631 – Emerging Technology Trends – Assignment 1 – Social Media

LIS 644 – Digital Libraries – Assignment 1 – Digital Collection Evaluation

LIS 658 – Archival Management – Assignment 3 – Archival Outreach

LIS 658 – Archival Management – Assignment 4 – Grant Writing