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People Profile: Valerie Tucci

governance model in contrast to the hierarchical structure usually found in the corporate world. The shared governance model results in a flatter organization structure, requiring the sort of thoughtful and deliberate discussions one associates with academic pursuits. All constituents of the academic community are represented including faculty, staff, and students. A plethora of viewpoints and opinions results, and when a consensus is reached most of these viewpoints have been given an opportunity to be expressed and debated. While slow and time-consuming, this process is well thought-out. I found that coming from a corporate environment, where the hierarchical structure identifies those in a position to make a quick decision, the shared governance model can be hard to adjust to or even stifling. Again, my decades of corporate management experience may cloud my view and influence my desire to see shorter response time. Other subject librarians appear very comfortable with the shared governance model.

In both academia and the corporate world, the art of reference requires that you help locate information that answers a question. In the corporate world, however, the emphasis is on accuracy and speed. In the academy, librarians are expected to teach methodology, so students and staff become more self-sufficient — whether they want to or not. Student requests, especially, cover all points in a spectrum of information needs, and it is a challenge to determine how interested they are in learning how to find information. Some students understand and are very eager to hone their search skills. Other students go so far as to request that I just tell them if the library has the book they want and where it is. If my library offered paging for books, I am sure some students would request I obtain the book from the stacks and deliver it or put it on hold for them. In the corporate world, with its emphasis on service, it was not unusual to deliver requested materials, but offering that assistance to more than 6,000 students is counter-productive, if not impossible.

Another challenge with meeting student information needs is trying to understand the students' backgrounds and knowledge bases. When I first started in this position and I was taking students on a tour of the library, I pointed out the large microfilm and microfiche collection. After several tours and more than a few blanks stares, I realized no one knew what microfiche was and that their chances of ever using it were near zero. I have made similar discoveries when I mentioned the **Library of Congress** classification and assumed anyone with a high school education was familiar with books arranged according to that scheme.

My subject expertise also influences how I handle reference questions. There is no doubt that I am most comfortable with students' questions in the areas for which I have subject responsibility: mathematics and statistics, physics, chemistry, computer science, and engineering. I find it a challenge to handle reference questions regarding women and

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against the grain

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Valerie Tucci

BORN & LIVED: Born in Pittsburgh, PA and lived in NJ almost 40 years.

FAMILY: Husband and five cats.

EDUCATION: Carlow University – BA Chemistry. University of Pittsburgh, MLS, ABD.

FIRST JOB: Drug store clerk.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Over 40 years in the corporate library world and 3 ½ years in academia.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Read, gardening.

FAVORITE BOOKS: *Black Beauty*.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Animals being abused.

PHILOSOPHY: Promoting peace.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Manager, **Information Services and Research Quality Air Products and Chemicals, Inc.**

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Tenure.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Very changed.

gender studies, world religions, music, and K-12 education.

The move to academia came with another entirely new responsibility: developing lesson plans and conducting information literacy classes. At **TCNJ**, librarians are faculty and thus share the teaching mandate of the faculty. I was expected to build on the required information literacy class and introduce subject-specific information sources to students. This was a new challenge for me, rewarding on many levels, but one in which I stumbled and blindly felt my way, continually re-evaluating and revising presentations. With no formal background in pedagogy and none provided on the job, I relied on my analytical training and quickly began to question providing instruction without assessing outcomes. So I selected one discipline, chemistry, and collaborated with faculty to design a three-year information literacy program along with three individual assessments to measure outcomes from the courses. I also learned how to design LibGuides that outline information sources for a specific discipline and assist students and faculty in retrieving subject-specific information. I view these LibGuides as a way to clarify and simplify using library resources for the undergraduate, but wonder if students become too dependent on them, especially as their creation proliferates among other subject librarians.

What do I miss most in academia? I wish there were more in-house staff development opportunities. In the corporate world, everything from simple team meetings, where we shared the results of **Myers Briggs** personality tests, to spending a week off-site participating in an **American Management Association** self-awareness course, afforded a stimulating en-

vironment to build experience and knowledge in areas such as organization development, team building, management, and supervision. Similar activities have not been offered during my three years in academia, and anecdotally it appears most academic librarians have only limited exposure to learning these skills in graduate school with little reinforcement with in-house job training seminars. Instead, librarians are required to learn management and supervisory skills on their own just as I was expected to learn pedagogy skills on my own. While I could avail myself of courses offered at **TCNJ**, the other participants would not be the colleagues with whom I work and with whom I wish to develop trust and build a stronger team. This lack of team-building activities, along with the tenure process, produces a type of isolation known as the "silo-effect" in academia in which faculty work in their own silo, resulting in limited interaction with other faculty. The "solo-effect" restricts communication and efforts to produce a united community. I may be the only subject librarian who had this negative perspective of the "silo-effect," and other subject librarians may favor this independent and stand-alone structure.

Corporate librarians who cross the bridge to academia bring tremendous subject expertise and real-world know-how that can be of enormous value to students and especially faculty. Helping students prepare for lifelong learning and assisting faculty in teaching and research is a great learning experience with many professional and personal rewards. I hope this essay encourages other corporate or special librarians to appreciate the differences between the two library worlds and embrace and accept the challenges of an academic position.