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It's My Deselection Project, I'll Cry If I Want To

by **Megan Lowe** (Interim Assistant Dean/Coordinator of Public Services/Associate Professor, University of Louisiana at Monroe) <lowe@ulm.edu>

The experiences communicated in this article are not just mine; they are also the experiences of my colleagues who continue to work alongside me as we tackle a large-scale deselection of our Library's vast print collection. It is indeed a tale of adversity and triumph, thankfully — though at many points in this process (which is, at the time of this writing, still going on, and will wrap up in the fall of 2016) it has seemed more adversity than triumph. I have, as the title of my article suggests, shed many a bitter tear because this seemingly straight-forward deselection project — one that is, according to the current dean of the Library who has been here since 1993 but is well aware of its history, 30 years overdue — turned into something else. That "something else" is what this article will chronicle: my experiences as the Coordinator of Public Services who also spearheads the deselection project, with regard to a particularly problematic faculty member. It will be connected to the historic enmity between library faculty and classroom faculty and address issues of academic incivility. Through this article strategies for dealing with such problematic persons will be identified, as well as recommendations for librarians and libraries undertaking similar projects of any scale for reducing or avoiding problems.

Background/Setting

The University Library has gone through several buildings and iterations over the many decades of the school's existence. Currently it occupies floors 1 through 5 of the 7-floor facility; floor 6 houses campus administration, while floor 7 is a conference center. The building opened on April 30, 1999, and has served as the campus library since that time. By 2013, the Library could boast of over 600,000 print volumes and over 600,000 non-book materials (e.g., government documents, as the Library is a government depository).¹ It also features Special Collections, which focus primarily on the history of Monroe and north Louisiana, and Archives, which focuses on the history of the university from its days as **Ouachita Parish Junior College** back in 1931.² The Library is currently home to the largest student computer lab on campus and several technology-equipped classrooms and study rooms.

As part of a larger digital initiative which I will not go into in this article, it was decided to condense the Library's circulating collection from four floors to two floors to make way for

technology-enabled spaces. This required a large-scale deselection which the Library was happy to undertake. At first, campus administration, who had pushed for the digital initiative, only granted the Library a year in which to deselect the entire collection. The Dean of the Library, **Don Smith**, was able to convince them that more time was needed, and the administration agreed to a two-year timeframe.

Deselection: Take 1 — Summer 2014

The project began over the summer of 2014, with actual weeding beginning in July. In preparation for the project the Library's Head of Technical Services, **Charles "Chuck" Hughes**, and I developed a list of criteria for deselection (see Appendix 1, "Criteria for Deselection") that the reference librarians would use to assess titles for removal. Librarians (including myself) were assigned different parts of the collection based on their liaison assignments. **Hughes**, being the library's administrator for **SIRSI Dynix Workflows**, granted the librarians permissions to be able to remove deselected titles from the collection; given that the Library only has two full-time and one part-time individual in Technical Services, giving the librarians such permissions was considered to be an efficient use of time and resources, rather than dumping the processing of such titles exclusively on Technical Services and its limited staff. This was especially considered in light of the anticipated volume of withdrawals. **Hughes** developed a step-by-step process that the librarians could follow in order to remove books from the Library's holdings using Workflows (see Appendix 2, "Procedures for Mass Weeding"). In developing this project and its documentation, the decision was made to not include the campus community in the process. Given the two-year timeframe, being understaffed, and the intensity of the project, it seemed counterproductive to involve the faculty. Whatever else, our decision to not include the faculty in the process was not malicious. Including faculty in such a project — even if it's just notifying them in good faith of the project — should be a part of the planning process for any deselection project. More actively including them may be tricky, but should there be meaningful interest in faculty participating in such projects, it should be given consideration.

Deselected books essentially fell into two categories: those that were still in good condition and were offered to the public on a table in the Library's lobby which became known as the "Free Kittens" table and books that were in such terrible shape that they went to a dumpster specially allocated for the Library's use in this project. It is likely that the Kittens table gave us away; after all, some people would ask where the books were coming from, which would

prompt an explanation of the process. It also seems likely that faculty and others saw trucks of books going to the dumpster to be thrown away which raised questions. At any rate, by the start of the fall semester of 2014, rumors had begun to spread around campus that the Library was throwing away ALLLL of the books. The Library's Faculty Senate (FS) representative, one of the reference librarians, sent me an email on August 28, 2014, entitled "Cat's out of the bag" in which she communicated that several FS representatives were feeling "snubbed" that they'd not been offered a chance to have "input on the weeding process and seem as if they're personally offended that they weren't asked about it."³

Deselection: Take 2 — Fall 2014

One senator in particular, a member of the English faculty whom I will henceforth refer to as Problematic Professor, or PP, was particularly irate. Through her efforts, the deselection process was shut down for several weeks while we went back to the drawing board and attempted to address the faculty's concerns regarding the project. To our immense frustration, the faculty did not seem to understand that deselection is a normal library process and a traditional function of the librarian; they did not understand how we could just throw books away. The University Library Committee (ULC — an advisory committee composed of non-Library faculty) also got involved and became the main voice for faculty in this discussion. PP was able to convene an ad hoc Senate committee to "address" the Library's deselection project and authored an invective 8-page document expressing concerns — a document shared through the ULC of which PP is a committee member. Much of the language reflected PP and the committee's misunderstanding of the digital initiative and the deselection project, as well as ignorance of the behind-the-scenes workings of a library. It also contained thinly-veiled insults regarding our competence and accused us of showing favoritism (we're not sure towards who in what way) and demanding that faculty be involved in the process.

What followed was a lengthy negotiation of a faculty input mechanism which I became responsible for developing. Once developed, the mechanism was submitted to concerned parties for feedback. Basically, books would be divided into two categories: damaged/duplicates which could be deselected without input from the faculty, and books which faculty would review, a category which subsequently was named LIMBO, which also serves as a "location" in Workflows during the review process, until a determination is made regarding its status (retain or discard, where discard means "goes to the Kittens Table" or "goes to the dumpster"). Faculty wanted

continued on page 14



three weeks to review books; we told them we didn't have that much time, and the administration was firm on not extending the project. After some final back and forth regarding other faculty options for review — namely, a list of all the books available for physical review would be posted on the Library's newly created deselection website⁴ so that off-campus and satellite campus professors could participate — the new mechanism was accepted. **Hughes** and I developed a new set of directions for the librarians for the new deselection process (see Appendix 3, "Deselection Process") which was also shared with the faculty. The deselection website contains a FAQ, the "Deselection Process" document, and the "Criteria for Deselection" document as well as the regularly updated deselection lists for faculty to review.

If we thought the new faculty input mechanism would solve our problems and assuage hurt feelings, we were sorely wrong. Deselection resumed in early October 2014, but throughout the weeks that followed, PP and a few other faculty members continued to send me emails voicing their displeasure with the project, the process, and the review period. Finally, toward the end of October 2014, the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VP/AA) produced a memo which clarified the administration's stance on the digital initiative, the deselection project, and the administration's faith in the Library's faculty and staff to carry out the project. The VP/AA made it clear that the review period was not negotiable. If faculty wanted to participate, they were encouraged to do so within the parameters of the project and to cease asking for extensions on the review period. We were not allowed to post this memo on the Deselection page, but we were authorized to share the memo with individuals who persisted in complaining about the project. The memo was disseminated to the FS.

We thought this memo would solve problems; we had been authorized to do what we were doing. We were not being unreasonable in not being able to extend the review period. We were abiding by the "charge" the administration had given us to facilitate the project. The memo made this clear. The rude emails seemed to stop, for which I was grateful; they had begun to wear on me. However, PP's intemperate and public displeasure with the project had begun to trickle back to the other librarians and staff, and it became evident that morale was suffering.

Continuing Troubles — Spring and Summer 2015

Nevertheless, the deselection continued without many problems until January 2015. At that time, PP discovered two titles on **Piaget** on the "Free Kittens" table which I had removed as duplicates. She sent an email to the Dean of the Library, the then-FS president, and members of the ad hoc deselection committee as well as the chair of the ULC questioning

the removal of these titles, questioning my integrity, and demanding "statistical data" regarding the Library's deselection activities, accusing me of "making claims" that I could not back up. This flies in the face of the fact that the Dean had always made information and data available to the ULC whenever asked. We were also often asked for data which we could not feasibly have — such as how many books were in poor condition or were likely to be deselected based on condition.

The spring semester continued with little kerfuffle. Knowing that summer would mean most faculty were not on campus, the Library decided to ask the ULC if physical review of the titles could be suspended for the summer. In other words, the books would not be made physically available for review, but the online list would remain in place. While the ULC had no objections, PP did object. She wanted to be able to make appointments with the librarians to continue physical review, insisting that she wasn't the only one who desired this option (though no other faculty ever came forward). She accused the Library of not taking the faculty seriously and of dealing with the faculty as a hardship. The Dean attempted to make it clear that the process of moving the books from the shelves to the librarians' offices then to the MGSLR then to Technical Services was time-consuming, and with many people opting to take annual leave over the summer, it seemed counterproductive. While PP fought this decision, the majority vote of the ULC allowed us to discontinue physical review.

Big Badda Boom — Fall 2015

All went well until late August of 2015. On Monday, August 24, my aunt, my mother's only other living sibling and with whom I was close, committed suicide very suddenly. It was devastating. My husband and I rushed to the little town in which she and her family lived and spent the next week there, helping her husband and children with arrangements. When I returned to work the following week, the week of August 31, everything seemed fine. However, later in the week, I received another email from PP; evidently two books which she had requested be retained somehow ended up on the "Free Kittens" table. She sent this email to my Dean; the President of the University; the Dean of the School of Arts, Education and Sciences; the Director of Humanities; the President of the FS; and the chair of the ULC. I will not reproduce the whole email here, but I wish to include the following excerpt:

*This is the second time that the library has not honored its own policies in the deselection process (the first was regarding **Jean Piaget**, as I have explained). Naturally, I have to now suspect that the library is not in fact honoring my requests, or anyone else's, with fidelity, and that the library staff are wasting my valuable time and my good will and efforts to participate in policy-making and collective-governance at ULM. I feel personally insulted that the library staff is lying to the faculty, and I would like an answer.*

This was not the first accusation of lying that PP lodged against us in the Library or me in particular. However, it was the first to be broadcast so far and wide and in no uncertain terms. This was in response to what turned out to be mistake — only the second of its kind, by PP's own admission. My response was simple; I explained to her that I did not know what happened owing to having been out a week due to my aunt's sudden death and that I would immediately begin investigating what had happened. I also added:

Your statement "I have to now suspect that the library is not honoring my requests, or anyone else's, with fidelity, and that the library staff are wasting my valuable time and my good will and efforts to participate in policy-making and collective-governance" seems unfair, given that this — by your own admission — is only the second time that such an occurrence has happened in the course of the project. It may have simply been a mistake on the part of the librarian checking the list — the librarian may have simply overlooked those titles. I think such mistakes are going to happen, and I think we may be forgiven for the occasional mistake which can — in this case — be easily rectified.

Furthermore, your statement "I feel personally insulted that the library staff is lying to the faculty" again seems unfair, given that this may well have simply been oversight. As I said, my aunt died last week, and I had to leave very quickly, leaving the librarians to cover all of my shifts while I was out of town for the funeral. Again I say, I think this may well be a mistake that can be easily rectified and does not warrant such accusations.

I include this much of my response in this article as a means of showing how one might diffuse such a situation. It acknowledges the feelings and statements of the problematic person, and often times it seems that this is what such individuals want: to feel that their voices are being heard and that you understand what they are saying.⁵ But I was tired of letting her barbs fly, and I felt if she was going to tattle on me and level accusations at us in the Library, I was going to respond to my accuser. While I do not recommend lashing back at such individuals, targeting specific problems (or accusations) and responding to them maturely and reasonably can facilitate a dialogue to address problems and identify solutions.

However, her email had caught the attention of the VP/AA who directed the Dean of Humanities to reprimand PP. Having this support made the situation much easier to bear. We had attempted at every turn to handle such problems at the Library level — that is, to not deliberately or directly involve the VP/AA in the handling of issues. However, PP made it evident that she did not respect the authority that the VP/AA had affirmed in his memo. The involvement of the VP/AA and the Dean of Humanities was a relief, while in the Library

continued on page 16

we have no authority to discipline PP, here were individuals who did have such authority. PP was directed to apologize to us; as of this date, we have yet to receive a meaningful apology, beyond PP apologizing for her "insensitive" tone during my family's difficult time. This event seemed to dampen PP's enthusiasm for trouble for several months.

A Precedent for Hostility: Enmity Between Classroom Faculty and Librarians

One might rightfully point out that PP's behavior is not representative of her colleagues or even faculty at large. This is true, and, in fact, several members of the ULC privately contacted me to express their support for the project, the Library, and even me personally. However, many of her statements regarding the competency and expertise of librarians versus the discipline-specific expertise of traditional classroom faculty echo what may be called the historical enmity between classroom faculty and library faculty.

This enmity dates back to the mid-1950s.⁶ There appear to be several factors which contribute to this enmity. The most commonly cited, and to my mind most likely and frequently occurring, is communication/miscommunication. There also appears to be a failure to recognize the common cause of teaching faculty and library faculty: to educate and support the students we serve.⁷ However, there are also issues which are immediately relevant to both my current situation and the focus of this overall issue; it is what one resource referred to as "incendiary collections issues."⁸ Related to this notion is the idea of territorial issues: jealousy of our "possession" of books and materials; our "encroachment" into the classroom; what they regard as our failure to participate appropriately in the wider academic community; and feeling threatened.⁹ Some of this jealousy and feeling threatened is related to another factor: a failure to understand our roles and services as librarians, as well as the services of the library itself.¹⁰ Being aware of these issues and attempting to overcome through active outreach and collaboration are key to reducing and preventing this enmity.

Do I believe that PP and other faculty members who deeply object to the deselection project were conscious, deliberate participants in this historical enmity? No. But they have clearly exhibited several of the behaviors described here. Might there be personality issues? Entirely possible. Some of PP's colleagues, both in her department and outside of it, have reported a similar pattern of behaviors as reported here in other circumstances, so it's not likely that PP has a special vendetta against the Library, librarians, or even me. But her behavior, quite apart from demonstrating that enmity, is also evidence of another issue beginning to gain attention in higher education: academic incivility.

continued on page 18

against the grain library profile

University of Louisiana at Monroe Library (ULM)

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LIBRARY BACKGROUND/HISTORY: The stunning twenty-four million dollar building currently housing the University Library is located on the banks of the scenic Bayou DeSiard. The five-story facility, of approximately 140,000 square feet, seats 2,000 users at study carrels, tables, and in comfortable easy chairs placed throughout the building. When the Library opened on April 12, 1999, the beautiful furnishings included ample shelving to accommodate at least ten years' growth. Growth and change have been a constant throughout the more than seven decades of the University Library's history.

Just as the university has gone through several different iterations, so has the Library. It has been housed in various buildings on campus, including Brown Hall and Bry Hall, before taking up residence in a building built for the library, Sandel Hall, name for **Mr. Percy Sandel**, a former district attorney and judge who had been instrumental in the establishment of the university. The library was housed in Sandel Hall from 1961 until 1999, when it moved to its current location. The library is both a state and a federal repository.

STAFF: A total of seven staff members, five full-time reference librarians (including me), one ILL librarian (who also serves as a reference librarian), one acquisitions librarian, one technical services/cataloging librarian, one special collections librarian (who also serves as the current assistant dean), and the dean.

TYPES OF MATERIALS YOU BUY: At this time, the majority of our budget goes towards our membership in a state consortium of electronic resources (databases, eJournals, and eBooks). We are currently transitioning to a more electronic/digital format and are trying to obtain a grant to fund eTextbooks.

USE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY: We do not currently have a mobile platform for our library resources.

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR LIBRARY WILL BE LIKE IN FIVE YEARS? The print collection will be reduced from four to two floors (a process currently in the offing). More digital resources will (hopefully) be added. The two floors "freed up" by the extensive weeding project we're currently undergoing will be fitted with technology-equipped spaces for teaching, learning, and collaborating. I think in five years it will more closely resemble the socializing/collaborating spaces that many libraries are transitioning towards.

DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION: I, **Megan Lowe**, currently serve as the Coordinator of Public Services. I am over Reference/Instruction and ILL. I coordinate with the Head of Circulation regarding public services issues. I work as both a reference librarian and an instructional librarian still, as well as serving as a liaison librarian to several departments. I frequently convene (and sometimes chair) committees to address issues and projects in the library. I meet weekly with the Head of Technical Services, the Assistant Dean, and the Dean to identify and address issues which arise within the library and those issues from the campus which may affect the library. As a faculty member, I serve on university-related committees outside the library. I must also publish and participate in professional development as a means of maintaining tenure and pursuing promotion again, to achieve the rank of Full Professor.

HOW MANY DIVISIONS ARE THERE IN YOUR DEPARTMENT? Technically, just two — Reference and ILL.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WORK IN YOUR DEPARTMENT? A total of six, including myself.

WHAT IS YOUR MATERIALS BUDGET? \$0. The library's budget is entirely handled by the Dean, and it goes primarily to our consortium membership and access to electronic resources.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF INTEREST TO ATG READERS: Currently my library is undertaking a HUGE deselection project. Part of the reason is that the collection hasn't been weeded in over 30 years. The other part is that it represents the first step in our transition to a primarily digital library. While there has been a lot of resistance on campus to this transition, I see it as an inevitable change, a reasonable response to the changing face of our student body and their changing needs, as well as a logical "evolution" of libraries in an increasingly digital, diverse, and global society. I also see it as a responsible use of our budget, given how unstable higher education monies and budgets are in this state, especially for public institutions. 🌱

Academic Incivility — What *Would Miss Manners* Say?

A colleague of mine sent me an article from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* from March 13, 2016, entitled “Halting Academic Incivility (That’s the Nice Word for It)” by **Patrick M. Scanlon**. Scanlon opens his article with a reference to a report published in 2015 in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* regarding incivility and ties it to “the regular calls for an end to faculty incivility — the rudeness, abusive language, bullying, and general meanness that seem to characterize many of our interactions.”¹¹ He points out that academic incivility and solutions for it are frequently topics of discussion but appear to “have a hard time gaining traction” and “are subsumed under the broader and softer term ‘collegiality,’ the professional relationships that unite us in a common purpose.”¹² Such discussions appear to primarily take the form of questioning if collegiality should be added “as a fourth faculty-evaluation criterion, along with teaching, research, and service.”¹³ Scanlon offers several recommendations for how to deal with academic incivility including calling out such behavior in a non-confrontational manner (i.e., not singling out guilty parties but addressing the impropriety of such behavior); fostering the importance of academic *civility* by making *incivility* a topic of discussion; “establish[ing] written ground rules for conduct in meetings and remind attendees of them beforehand,” which requires an effective moderator; and reminding leaders and supervisors of their responsibility for checking such behavior.¹⁴ Scanlon concludes his piece by stating that “we shouldn’t wink at obnoxious behavior among our colleagues in the name of academic freedom.”¹⁵ Considering how demoralized my colleagues and I have been by the incivility of PP, winking at her obnoxious behavior and simply accepting it clearly are not and never should have been viable options for dealing with her.

I have been asked why I have not yet filed formal complaints against PP with the university’s Human Resources department. One reason is that “While it may be immoral and unprofessional, it is not universally illegal in the United States for managers to threaten, insult, humiliate, ignore or mock employees.”¹⁶ Of course, PP is not my manager, but she is a colleague who engaged in some of the “immoral and unprofessional” behaviors represented in this list. In other words, it may well be debatable whether I have a leg to stand on for a formal complaint. But I bring up these behaviors because these and others are more problematic than simple incivility. They represent bullying behaviors which are unacceptable in any context. Bullies engage in a variety of behaviors: they “**make personal insults, invade another’s personal space, make uninvited physical contact, make both verbal and nonverbal threats and intimidation, make sarcastic jokes and tease, write withering emails, engage in public shaming, make rude interruptions,**

continued on page 20

against the grain people profile

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BORN AND LIVED: Jackson, MS, in 1979; lived most of my life in Jackson until moving to Hattiesburg, MS, to attend the **University of Southern Mississippi (USM)** to obtain my MLIS. Lived and worked briefly in Missouri before moving to Monroe, LA. Have been in Monroe and at ULM since 2003.

EARLY LIFE: Lived in Jackson most of my life. My mother was a school teacher until the early 1990s, when she became a school counselor. My dad worked for my hometown newspaper, *The Clarion Ledger*. They’re both retired now and live in Raymond, MS. I attended **Mississippi College (MC)** following high school; I obtained a Bachelor’s in English from **MC** and worked in the campus library the whole time I attended **MC**. I began working on a Master’s in English at **MS** before transferring to **USM**. My parents have run their church library for many years, and I still volunteer in that library (which still uses a card catalog!). In 2008 I obtained a second Master’s degree (in English) from **ULM**.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I started at **ULM** in 2003 as a tenure-track reference/instructional librarian. Since then, I have obtained tenure and have been promoted to the rank of **Associate Professor**. In 2012 I became the Coordinator of Public Services. In 2010 I founded *Codex: The Journal of the Louisiana Chapter of the ACRL*, an open access, peer-reviewed journal focus on academic librarianship; I still serve as the editor. I have published several articles on various topics. I co-authored a book chapter on my state’s consortium. I frequently present at conferences on a variety of topics. I’m a huge supporter of information literacy, open access, digital textbooks, institutional repositories, and digital humanities. I hope to move into library administration in the next few years.

FAMILY: I’m married to **Eric**; we’ll celebrate 14 years of marriage in October. We have several cats with definitive (and sometimes infuriating) personalities. We have two goddaughters and three nieces, with another niece and a nephew on the way in July! My parents and **Eric’s** mom still live in MS, as do my brother and sister and their families. **Eric’s** brother lives in Lake Charles, LA, with his family.

IN MY SPARE TIME: What spare time? Just kidding! I read, write poetry, freelance edit, and enjoy several hobbies including making jewelry, making soap, making candles, putting together puzzles, and playing videogames. I particularly enjoy traveling, especially to attend heavy metal concerts. I am also a huge letter writer and enjoy sending letters and cards to family and friends all over the world.

FAVORITE BOOKS: *Pattern Recognition, Necromancer, and Count Zero* by **William Gibson**; *The Witches of Eastwick* by **John Updike**; *The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr. Hoffmann* by **Angela Carter**; *Dune* by **Frank Herbert**; *Pride & Prejudice* by **Jane Austen**; *The Mothman Prophecies* by **John Keel**; *The Witching Hour, Cry to Heaven, and Blackwood Farm* by **Anne Rice**; and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* by **Philip K. Dick**.

PET PEEVES: Whistling (especially in the library); people who don’t respect personal space; people who eat with their mouths open; people who wait until the last minute to get their research and then get mad at me because I can’t work miracles; discourtesy/rudeness; and presumption.

PHILOSOPHY: Love is the best thing we have, and it’s the best thing we can give others. Love has many forms, many shapes and shades. Compassion is too often overlooked and is perhaps one of the most important forms of love we can show.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Being made the Interim Assistant Dean of the library just four short years after becoming the Coordinator of Public Services — and achieving both of those things before the age of 40.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: To have some significant experience as the Assistant Dean under my belt and hopefully become an Assistant Dean at another library. I also hope to achieve the rank of Full Professor.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: More and more focused on digital resources and assisting our communities (whether that’s a campus community, a school, or a neighborhood) in the creation of digital products — I think the traditional research paper/project is going to morph into something more multidimensional as people gain more and more access to digital resources and tools. I think librarians will still be relevant and needed to guide people in the use and application of these resources and tools. Librarianship is not slow to change, but people are slow to accept change in libraries and library resources. I think some of the changes that libraries are undergoing at this time (going from temples to books to more social spaces that facilitate collaboration) will see fruition in five years, but not on as wide a scale as I would hope. 🌱



glare and give dirty looks, and treat people as if they are invisible.”¹⁷ Bullies are known to “treat others in rude, disrespectful manners, interfere with work activities, give the silent treatment, give little or no feedback on work performance, withhold deserved praise, fail to give needed information, delay action on important personnel decisions, lie, and prevent individuals from expressing themselves.”¹⁸ (I have bolded the ones my colleagues and I have experienced in our dealings with PP.) Regardless of the passion for libraries and reading and love of books that PP professes (which she uses to justify her behaviors), engaging in these behaviors is unacceptable. Organizational policies addressing the impropriety of and the penalties for such behavior are needed to discourage hostile work environments. But more than that: enforcing such policies and encouraging individuals to report bullying behavior are necessary to make such policies meaningful. Encouraging employees to intervene or report observed bullying behavior are also key.

Seeing the Light at the End of the Tunnel and Final Thoughts

In the course of the spring semester of 2016, we have heard and seen little of PP. Needless to say, this has been a relief for all of us. Two of the reference librarians jobs at other libraries because they could no longer deal with PP and how demoralizing the whole deselection process had become as a result of her actions. I confess, in over a decade of working in academic libraries, this project and the experiences with PP have made me for the first time question my decision to become and my desire to remain a librarian. Nevertheless, I have regained my enthusiasm for librarianship and overcome those doubts as a result of the support of my Library colleagues and the support of classroom faculty who — even while bemoaning the project — appear to understand it and to disapprove of PP’s behavior.

Owing to budget troubles, the digital initiative has been delayed. This has allowed us to extend the deselection project through to the fall of 2016 which is also a relief. Health problems such as sinus infections and respiratory illness seem to be increasing among those of us dealing with deselection. The campus also had to close for several days during the early part of the spring semesters of 2016 as a result of inclement weather, a process which delayed us all. We were concerned by these setbacks,

but the delay of the initiative has gained us some much-needed time. We will soon discontinue access to LIMBO books for physical review of the summer as we did last summer, but we do not anticipate any objections from PP, as she has not made much noise in the last few months.

We can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and it’s not a train. It’s the light between the many shelves of books we have emptied in our efforts to create a collection that is up-to-date, relevant to the curricular and research needs of our campus, and reflective of the missions and goals of our university. We are also attempting to respond meaningfully to the needs of our students as well as incorporating appropriate practices from significant trends in libraries and library science. We recognize that this is not necessarily going to make us popular with everyone; however, that is no excuse for the abusive and bullying behaviors we have experienced. I hope my experiences are both cathartic and encouraging to others; I hope they are also useful and help others in similar situations or those about to undertake similar projects. At the end of the day, we as librarians have certain obligations which we must fulfill, regardless of how the members of the communities we serve understand those obligations, including deselection.

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Future Dates for Charleston Conferences



Preconferences and Vendor Showcase Main Conference

2016 Conference	2 November	3-5 November
2017 Conference	8 November	9-11 November
2018 Conference	7 November	8-10 November
2019 Conference	6 November	7-9 November
2020 Conference	4 November	5-7 November