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WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP: LIBRARIES AND PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY EDUCATION IN KANSAS

Summary: The state of Kansas in the midwestern United States was the first state in America to have an entirely female elected city council – in the city of Oskaloosa, Kansas in 1888, as well as the first state to have a female mayor take office - in Argonia, Kansas in 1862. More recently in 2013, the then female State Librarian of Kansas was recognized by Library Journal as their Librarian of the Year, a national honor, in recognition of her significant work with e-book licensing.

Kansas is also home to the first professional school for library education west of the Mississippi river - Emporia State University, founded in 1902, and the School of Library and Management continues to educate professional libraries with programs in Kansas and in six other states: South Dakota, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon. The majority of library workers in the United States have traditionally been female, but the general impression amongst librarians is that there are more men now entering the profession than before. Additionally, although in the majority, females were not always appointed to leadership positions, with males disproportionately holding leadership positions, although again the perception is that this has changed and women now more leadership positions, although men may still be overrepresented in leadership positions.

This study looked at the leadership of public, academic and special libraries in Kansas to identify the people in leadership positions to see if, in fact, the perception of a more balanced library leadership was accurate. It also looked at the gender trends in library science education over the past 12 years, as seen from the Kansas perspective. An examination of the data showed that women occupy the majority of library leadership positions in Kansas in all types and sizes of libraries. The proportion of males in leadership positions is equivalent to the proportion of male students entering library school at Emporia State University from 2007 to 2019.

Keywords: The state of Kansas, School of Library and Management, library schools, USA.

The state of Kansas in the midwestern United States was a pioneer in promoting leadership by women. It was the first state in America to have an entirely female elected city council – in the city of Oskaloosa, Kansas in 1888 - as well as the first state to have a female mayor take office - in Argonia, Kansas in 1862.¹ More recently in 2013, the then female State Librarian of Kansas was recognized by *Library Journal* as their Librarian of the Year, a national honor, in recognition of her significant work with e-book licensing.² Kansas also has a long history of libraries being established by individual women or women's organizations, with the Coal Creek library

- 1 Monroe Billington. "Susanna Madora Salter – First woman mayor". *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (1954): 173-183. http://www.kancoll.org/khq/1954/54_3_billington.htm (Retrieved August 18, 2019), Center for American Women and Politics. "Milestones for women in American politics", <https://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/facts/milestones-for-women> (Retrieved August 18, 2019)
- 2 John N. Berry III. "Jo Budler: LJ's 2013 Librarian of the Year", *Library Journal* (2013, January 7). <https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=joanne-jo-budler-2013-librarian-of-the-year> (Retrieved August 10, 2019).

being founded in 1859,³ even before the admission of Kansas as the 34th State of the United States of America in 1861.⁴

Library Education in Kansas

Kansas is also home to the first professional school for library education west of the Mississippi river - Emporia State University, founded in 1902 as part of the Kansas State Normal School⁵. The School of Library and Management (SLIM) continues to educate professional librarians with programs in Kansas and in six other states in the western United States: South Dakota, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon, utilizing a model of blended distance education that has been developed over the past 30 years after the school first began teaching outside of the state of Kansas.

Perception of Gender Representation in Library Leadership

The majority of library workers in the United States have traditionally been female, but the general impression among librarians is that there are now more men entering the profession than before. Additionally, although in the majority, females were not always appointed to leadership positions, with males disproportionately holding leadership positions, although again the perception is that this has changed and women now occupy more

3 Allen Gardiner. *Kansas public libraries from Abilene to Zenda: A concise history*. (Topeka, KS: State Library of Kansas, 1982).

4 "When Kansas Became a State". *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 27 No. 1: 1-21. <https://www.kshs.org/p/when-kansas-became-a-state/13159> (Retrieved August 20, 2019)

5 School of Library and Information Management. "SLIM History". <https://www.emporia.edu/school-library-and-information-management/about/history/> (Retrieved August 21, 2019)

leadership positions, although men may still be overrepresented in library leadership

Method

This study looked at the leadership of public, academic, and special libraries in Kansas to identify the people in leadership positions to see if, in fact, the perception of a more equitable library leadership is accurate. It also looked at the gender trends in library education, as seen from the Kansas perspective, and examined the gender composition of cohorts in SLIM's professional preparation program leading to the Master of Library Science degree from 2007 until 2019.

Library Leadership Data

The basis of this investigation was the *Directory of public libraries in Kansas*⁶, which lists all public libraries in the State of Kansas, together with contact information including the name of the library director. As this directory is constantly updated, all analysis is based on the information current in the directory on August 28, 2019, although where information was missing, such as an open position, this information was obtained direct from the library or library website, if available, within the following three weeks which constituted the study period. Information on academic libraries, both public (under the control of the Kansas Board of Regents) and private; special libraries (including corporate, law, medical, and other special libraries); as well as the six regional library systems was also obtained from the Kansas State Library website directories⁷

6 Kansas State Library. "Directory of public libraries in Kansas". <https://kslib.info/DocumentCenter/View/3501/Public-Library-Directory?bidId> (Retrieved August 28, 2019)

7 "Directory of public libraries in Kansas"

on the same August date. School libraries fall under the aegis of the Kansas Department of Education rather than the Kansas State Library and were not considered as part of this study.

All library data were entered into a spreadsheet and libraries and grouped by type and size. All grouping followed the State Library directory classifications which not only identified libraries by type (public, academic, special), but also subdivided within each broad category. Public libraries were identified as being a city library, further divided into three categories depending on size, a county, district, township, or a regional library. Academic libraries were identified as Regents institutions (4-year public universities), private institutions, and community colleges (2-year institutions also under the control of the Kansas Board of Regents.) Special libraries were categorized as corporate, medical, law and other special libraries (which included the State Library itself and the State Historical Society.)

The names of the library director or other title denoting the head of the organization were then allocated to binary gender categories based on an examination of their name. For names where there was any question, such as names that could be used by either gender, names using only initials and a last name, or for names that had no gender norm, further investigation was undertaken. In some cases, questions were resolved by reference to a biography on the library's website, but in other cases a question was posed directly to library staff via a phone call. The binary gender classification was chosen to align with the library school enrollment data discussed below.

Data were then analyzed across the whole population of libraries, as well as within each category and subcategory to determine the representation of female and male leadership within Kansas libraries and the data are presented in tables 1– 4.

SLIM MLS Enrollment Data

Summary enrollment data by gender for the SLIM master's program were provided by Emporia State University's Office of Institutional Effectiveness upon request. Data were provided for a 12-year period from 2007 to 2019 and included information on response and non-response to the question of gender identity, as well as the actual gender identity response. Only binary gender options were available and, as no other information on this topic was solicited, it is not possible to determine if the non-responses were caused by students wishing to select another gender identity option, or simply choosing not to disclose gender identity at all. The University does not use gender identity as the basis of any admission or other program decisions, so there was no penalty to students for not reporting this information.

The researcher's intention was to compare the enrollment of female and male students in the two Kansas cohorts with enrollment in the cohorts in other locations. However, although the information provided was generally divided by geographic cohort location, changes in cohort designations within Kansas, the use of generic cohort categories in some years, as well as inconsistent recording of cohort information made it difficult to make consistent comparisons across cohort locations in each year. Accordingly, only total enrollments for each year were considered, although students in the Kansas cohorts comprised the majority of the enrollments. In addition, the university changed data systems prior to the 2007 school year and obtaining comparable data from earlier enrollment years proved to be beyond the ability and scope of this current study.

Note the data comprise of enrolled students, not graduated students, so as the majority of students completed their master's degree with their cohort group in 6 semesters or 24 months, the enrollment numbers include most individual students in two years'

figures, with a small number completing their degree in less time or more than the usual two years.

Data from the various categories were combined in a spreadsheet and the number of female, male and undeclared students calculated for each year, together with the percentage of overall student enrollment by gender.

Findings

Women in Leadership in Kansas Libraries

The summary data Table 1 shows that women fill the majority of leadership roles within Kansas public, academic and special libraries. Table 1 shows that of the 446 library director positions identified in the records of the Kansas State Library 86.3% or 385 were held by women with only 13.7% or 61 held by men. Public libraries had the highest percentage of female leadership (90.4%), with women leading in all other categories – academic libraries (68%), special libraries (60%) and regional library systems (57.1%)

Table 1

Summary of Kansas Library Leadership August 2019

Library Type	Female Director	F % of total	Male Director	M % of total
Public	338	90.4	36	9.6
Academic	34	68.0	16	32.0
Special	9	60.0	6	40.0
Library Systems	4	57.1	3	42.9
Total	385	86.3	61	13.7

Table 2 provides a more detailed breakdown of leadership. In the field of academic libraries, 75% of both public and private 4-year institutions had female leaders, while in the public 2-year community colleges 59.1% of directors were female and 40.9% were male. In the special library categories the numbers were more

evenly distributed, other than in the case of corporate libraries, but the actual number of libraries in each case was small, with only 15 libraries identified within these categories. A similar situation of even numbers was found in the case of the regional library systems, which number only 7.

Table 2

Kansas Library Leadership by Library Type August 2019

Library Type	Female Director	F % of total	Male Director	M % of total
Public	338	90.4	36	9.6
Academic - Regents	6	75.0	2	25.0
Academic - Private	15	75.0	5	25.0
Academic - Community College	13	59.1	9	40.9
Corporate	2	100	0	0
Law	2	50.0	2	50.0
Medical	4	57.1	3	42.9
Special	1	50.0	1	50.0
Regional Library Systems	4	57.1	3	42.9

A breakdown of public libraries by State Library classification is provided in Table 3. City designations are defined by state law and a city of the first class has a population of more than 15,000, that of the second class has a population between 2,000 and 15,000, and a city of the third class has a population of fewer than 2,000 inhabitants⁸.

County, district, and township libraries are designated by the areas they serve, rather than using city/size designations. Again the majority of library directors in each category are female, although there are proportionately higher percentages of male leadership in the two larger categories of city libraries – 21.1% of city libraries in the first class and 16.4% of city libraries in the second class.

8 State of Kansas, “Kansas Statutes Annotated”, http://www.kslegislature.com/li/b2019_20/statute/ (Retrieved August 29, 2019).

Table 3

Kansas Public Library Leadership by Classification August 2019

Public Library Classification	Female Director	F % of total	Male Director	M % of total
City 1st class	15	78.9	4	21.1
City 2nd class	61	83.6	12	16.4
City 3rd class	167	96.0	7	4.0
County	15	100	0	0
District	11	91.7	1	8.3
Township	24	100	0	0
Other (School District)	1	100	0	0

In 1965 Kansas established seven regional library systems that were designed to provide assistance to public libraries within their geographical area and to promote the extension of library services⁹. Not all public libraries choose to participate in a regional library system, but Table 4 shows the leadership of the 320 libraries that do participate. Again, female leadership is in the majority in all regions, with the lowest percentage, 84.4% occurring in the North East Kansas region and the highest, 96.4% in the South East Kansas region.

Table 4

Kansas Public Library Leadership by Region August 2019

Public Library Region	Female Director	F % of total	Male Director	M % of total
North West Kansas	18	90.0	2	10.0
North Central Kansas	37	92.5	3	7.5
North East Kansas	38	84.4	7	15.6
Central Kansas	51	92.7	4	7.3
South West Kansas	32	94.1	2	5.9
South Central Kansas	64	90.1	7	9.9
South East Kansas	53	96.4	2	3.6

9 Kansas State Library. "Directory of public libraries in Kansas". <https://kslib.info/DocumentCenter/View/3501/Public-Library-Directory?bidId> (Retrieved August 28, 2019)

Female and Male Enrollment in Library School

Enrollment data in the Master of Library Science degree program is presented in Table 5. The highest percentage of male enrollment occurred in 2007 where 24.8% of students were male, with the next highest enrollment of 23.5 percent occurring in 2016, while the lowest percentage of 16% occurred in 2009. The male/female enrollment percentages have remained relatively consistent across the 12-year period, despite an increase in program numbers from a total of 105 enrolled students in 2007 to the 2019 total of 371 enrolled students. Contrary to expectations and the general perception among librarians and library faculty, enrollment by male students has decreased generally as a percentage of enrollment since 2007, although still representing about 20% of total student numbers.

Table 5

SLIM Master of Library Science Enrollment by Gender 2007 - 2019

Year	Female Students	F % of total	Male Students	M % of total	Not reported	NR % of total
2007	79	75.2	26	24.8	0	0
2008	107	75.9	34	24.1	0	0
2009	163	84.0	31	16.0	0	0
2010	165	81.7	37	18.3	0	0
2011	155	77.5	45	22.5	0	0
2012	221	78.1	62	21.9	0	0
2013	241	80.1	59	19.6	1	0.3
2014	262	80.6	61	18.8	2	0.6
2015	249	77.8	70	21.9	1	0.3
2016	218	76.5	67	23.5	0	0
2017	250	79.1	65	20.6	1	0.3
2018	274	80.1	65	19.0	3	0.9
2019	291	76.0	80	20.9	12	3.1
Total	2675	78.7	702	20.7	20	0.6

Discussion

The general perception of women holding a more equitable portion of library leadership positions was born out by the findings. Overall women occupied leadership roles in more than 90% of public libraries, 68% of academic libraries, 60% of special libraries and over 57% of regional library systems in Kansas. In the special libraries categories the numbers were much more evenly distributed between the genders, although in many sub-categories there were only a few libraries represented, so any single appointment of either a male or female director would have greater potential to influence the percentage representation.

Academic libraries provided an interesting view as, although both public and private 4-year institutions had female leadership in 75% of cases, community colleges showed a different pattern with an almost 60/40 split of female to male leadership. Community colleges have often housed more practical courses in addition to purely academic ones, so it may be that this larger percentage of male library directors reflects a traditional male bias toward technical subjects. However no data were gathered on length of time in office, so it is not possible to determine if these male library directors in the community colleges are of longer tenure than their female counterparts, or if the larger proportion of males is due to some other cause. Further investigation on this topic is required.

In the public library category, female leadership was prevalent in every category. The two categories where male leadership was most apparent – the two largest categories of city libraries – male leadership still only registered 21% and 16% of library directors. Analysis of the public library data by library region again shows the predominance of female leadership, with the largest male leadership percentage appearing in the regions that host some of

the larger 1st and 2nd class city libraries, as might be expected from the other findings. Leadership of libraries in the 3rd class cities was almost completely female at 96%.

One limitation of this study is that it took no account of professional qualification of library directors, as this information was not included in the library directories. While the larger public, academic and special libraries require directors to hold an ALA-accredited master's degree, many of the smaller libraries do not. In these libraries the library director may occupy the only paid position in the library, and this may also be part time position and may not provide a salary commensurate with the professional qualification. It is therefore not possible to state the extent to which professionally qualified females or males hold leadership positions. More study of this particular aspect of leadership is needed.

In terms of library school enrollment over the previous 12 years, the perception of an increase in the percentage of male students was not born out by the data. However, while the actual percentage has decreased from a high of almost 25% in 2007, hovering around 20% in most years, the actual number of male library students has increased to keep pace with the increase in female students of library science, so the proportion of female to male students has remained relatively constant.

It is perhaps too early in a career to expect 2007 or 2008 library school graduates to hold leadership positions in the larger public or academic libraries, but the general enrollment trends suggest that only in a few categories may males be overrepresented in leadership roles. The community college instance has already been noted, but the two other academic library categories provide other examples where one quarter of library directors were male. The next highest percentage of 21% in the largest category of public libraries would appear to be in line with the gender distribution of enrollment figures.

It may be necessary to investigate enrollment trends over a longer period to see if the period of this study began after the perceived increase in male enrollment or if the perceived increase in male librarians is simply that more male librarians are seen to be part of the regular library staff, rather than occupying only leadership positions. In addition, a study that takes account of a larger population of librarians and library directors may result in a different understanding of the representation of women in leadership generally within the library profession.

Conclusion

This study looked at the prevalence of female leadership within Kansas libraries to consider whether leadership positions were distributed equitably. The findings suggest that women hold a proportion of leadership roles appropriate to the male/female balance within the profession suggested by the SLIM enrollment statistics, with the exception of community college libraries and perhaps the other academic libraries. Analysis of twelve years of enrollment data in the professional library program of SLIM suggests that the female to male ratio remains about 20%. Further study is required to consider enrollment trends over a longer period of time and also to investigate if these leadership proportions hold true for professionally qualified library directors.

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ЖЕНЕ У УПРАВЉАЊУ: БИБЛИОТЕКЕ И СТРУЧНО БИБЛИОТЕЧКО ОБРАЗОВАЊЕ У КАНЗАСУ

Сажетак: Држава Канзас на средњем западу Сједињених Држава била је прва држава у Америци која је имала искључиво женско изабрано градско веће – у граду Оскалуса, Канзас 1888. године, као и прва држава у којој је жена градоначелница преузела дужност – у Аргонији, Канзас, 1862. Недавно, 2013. године, тадашња државна библиотекарка Канзаса проглашена је од стране Library Journal за библиотекарку године, што је национална част, као признање за њен значајан рад у обради е-књига. Канзас је такође дом прве професионалне школе за библиотечко образовање западно од реке Мисисипи – Emporia State University, основаног 1902. године, а Школа за библиотекарство и менаџмент наставља да образује библиотекарке са програмима у Канзасу и у шест других држава: Јужној Дакоти, Колорадо, Јута, Ајдахо, Невада и Орегон. Већина библиотечких радника у Сједињеним Државама традиционално су жене, али општи утисак међу библиотекарима је да сада више мушкараца улази у ову професију него раније. Поред тога, иако у већини, жене нису увек биле именоване на руководеће позиције, при чему мушкарци непропорционално заузимају лидерске позиције, иако је опет перцепција да се то променило и да су жене сада више на руководећим позицијама, иако мушкарци и даље могу бити презаступљени на руководећим позицијама Ова студија је разматрала руковод-

ство јавних, академских и специјалних библиотека у Канзасу како би идентификовала људе на водећим позицијама да би видела да ли је, у ствари, перцепција уравнотеженијег руководства библиотека тачна. Такође су разматрани родни трендови у библиотечком образовању у последњих 12 година, као што се види из перспективе Канзаса. Анализа података показала је да жене заузимају већину руководећих позиција у библиотекама у Канзасу у свим врстама и величинама библиотека. Процент мушкараца на руководећим позицијама је еквивалентан проценту мушких студената који улазе у библиотечку школу на Emporia State Univeristy од 2007. до 2019. године.

Кључне речи: држава Канзас, школа за библиотекарство и менаџмент, библиотечке школе, САД.