MLA: Future of Libraries Interest Group (July 2018)

In Attendance

Conni Strittmatter (Facilitator), Sara Arnold (Recorder), Dorothy Stoltz, Michael Blackwell, Sarah White, Olivia Horvath, James Donaldson Cindy Pol, Alli Jessing, Ella Alonso

Initial Discussion: What is FOLIG? What are we for??

To begin, we discussed some of the foundational aspects of this new interest group, including formulating goals, thinking about the group's purpose and objectives, and figuring out how to share ideas with the greater MLA audience.

FOLIG Goals

We established the following goals for the group:

1. Develop conversation within the group about what is going on in our systems and what we're reading about throughout multiple disciplines.

2. Invite guests to attend meetings from areas outside of libraries to fill us in on their world.

3. Share our discussions regularly through monthly *CRAB* articles summarizing our discussions and inviting people to discuss the articles via Slack.

4. Sponsor an MLA session at MLA Annual.

5. *(Long Term Goal)* Create basic competencies that establish a "Maryland Brand" of librarian.

Further Elucidation of the Group's Purpose and Objectives

We brainstormed some ideas for the niche we see this interest group filling in the wider MD Libraries audience:

- This group can serve as a "clearinghouse" for trends, trendspotting, and sharing out to MLA.

- The collective discussions we have can help steer MD's libraries.

- This group will help to facilitate conversation outside of our individual "bubbles", whether by library system, type of library, or some other "bubble".

- A potential deliverable might be a toolkit that we can share with state. It is important to note that at this juncture, creating such a deliverable is not part of the interest group's stated goals. *(Putting here to keep in mind for future ideas sessions.)*

- We will meet at varying locations across the state.

- Each meeting will have a pre-determined topic, for which we will have ideas in mind in order to generate a healthy, productive discussion.

- We will regularly write articles for *CRAB*. These articles, then, can serve as outreach to the rest of MLA librarians and thereby facilitate discussions amongst MLA-at-large.

Figueroa Training: What Topics Will We Research?

To jumpstart our discussion of topic areas for discussion, we had a collaborative recap of the recent MLA-offered training led by Miguel Figueroa.

Figueroa discussed the role of futurists and how libraries can adopt the ideas as practical applications for our field. We can use this vision to help determine future competencies for future librarians.

Also to note is the concept of "futures planning". We threw out queries about this topic, such as:

- How does planning for multiple futures tie-in to future "core competencies" of librarianship?
- We can't necessarily prescribe the future, but how do we best prepare ourselves for whatever may come?

Based on Figueroa's "scanning domains", we decided on the following 6 topic themes to research:

- **Environment/Infrastructure** (natural environment, collections, physical spaces)

- **Community** (including demographics)

- **Workforce** (leadership, advocacy, job development)

- **Lifelong Learning** (education, arts, programming)

- **Politics & Economics**

- **Technology**

Scanning topics are *purposely broad*. We discussed that a single topic will have applications in different types of contexts, such as: global, environmental, MD libraries as a whole, individual library systems, and MLA membership.

MAPLA Whitepaper Review (Discussion)

Dorothy and Cindy shared MAPLA's current perspective on futuristic issues. They shared with us the current version of a whitepaper in this regard. The whitepaper is still in process.

Part of the goal in creating the whitepaper is to encourage competencies needed for future-ready schools. Specifically, goals for future-ready schools that lead to achieving "personalized student learning". (For more information, check out: http://www.FutureReady.org/Librarians.

We took a look at the conceptual graphic on the MAPLA Whitepaper; and, we discussed the fact that YALSA has also created a similar "wedge" design.

Some points/ideas that this discussion sparked are:

- Can public libraries work with these ideas to show how they are contributing to future-ready initiatives?

- Can public libraries adopt this concept to be: "What's the ultimate goal of public libraries?"

- Would something similar to the MAPLA whitepaper be a good thing to create for public libraries to potentially use as an assessment or planning tool?

- Can MD be a model for other states?

Topic Facilitators

Attendees selected the topics they would like to facilitate for an upcoming meeting.

- Environment/Infrastructure: Michael & Dorothy

- Community: Sarah White & Olivia

- Workforce: James & Cindy

- Lifelong Learning: Alli & Sara Arnold

- Politics & Economics: Conni

- Technology: Ella

Structure for Article Conversations

1. Post articles to the appropriate Slack channel as we find them.

2. We understand that based on the nature of our research, we may find Website-born articles. In these cases, share link to the URL.

3. Right now, we anticipate that we will be looking at mostly secondary research.

4. We will have a "#general" channel to share questions not related to a specific topic.

5. Topic facilitators collate articles and plan for their assigned meeting.

6. Topic facilitators lead discussion at their assigned meeting.

7. Topic facilitators will write an article for their topic to be submitted to *CRAB*, using meeting discussion notes/ideas as a guide.

8. FOLIG will invite the rest of "MLA world" to join in the conversation on the topic, based on the article.

Upcoming Meetings

We agreed on the following general structure for upcoming meetings:

- Meetings will be held monthly on the 1st Monday of the month @ 10am.

- We will allot 2 hours for a meeting.

- We would like to incorporate "call in"/digital meeting participation for those who are unable to meet at the specified location.

- If appropriate, guest lecturers will be invited when they can add interesting perspectives to a topic.

- Listed below are the dates/focus topics for the next few months:

  - August 6th: Environment/Infrastructure

  - September 4th: Community *(meet Tuesday because of Labor Day)*

  - October 1st: Workforce

  - November 5th: Lifelong Learning

  - December 3rd: Politics & Economics

  - January 7th: Technology

  - February 4th

Next Steps/Action Items

- Set up a FOLIG Slack workspace, with channels named according to the themes we've identified in our goals. *(Olivia)*

- Share social media contact information on the general Slack channel. *(All)*

- Find articles for "Environment" discussion and share to Slack (links, PDFs if no link available). *(All)*

- Collate the articles shared on the Slack channel and build topics for discussion at the next meeting. *(Michael and Dorothy)*

- If you were unable to attend the meeting, please email Conni to let her know your topic of choice.

- If your library would like to host an upcoming meeting, send Conni the dates that you would be available to host.

Next Meeting/Agenda Building

- Date/Location: August 6th @ HCLS (DIY Branch in Elkridge)

- Primary Focus Topic: Environment/Infrastructure

- Discuss ideas for our MLA Session.

- How are we doing on our goals??