



## Structure, Culture, and Agency: Examining Succession Planning in California State University (CSU) Libraries

Crystal Goldman<sup>a,b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Instruction Coordinator/Associate Librarian, UC San Diego Library, University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, CA, USA; <sup>b</sup>Doctoral Student, Department of Leadership Studies, University of San Diego, San Diego, CA, USA

### ABSTRACT

The Library and Information Science (LIS) literature in the last few decades has made clear that academic libraries have experienced deep budget cuts, hiring freezes, and an aging workforce. In response to this situation, many libraries have reorganized and flattened the hierarchy in their organizational structures, leaving far fewer middle management positions. An unfortunate consequence of this situation is that, as Baby Boomer library administrators/deans retire, there are few qualified applicants to succeed them. Thus, many in the LIS field have called for better succession planning by current library deans, while others have pointed out the difficulty of succession planning in libraries with flat organizational structures. Few studies, however, have directly addressed this issue by examining deans' perceptions or behavior in regard to succession planning. This study attempts to begin filling this gap in the literature by conducting a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with library deans in academic libraries with flat organizational structures. Findings include an examination of the structure, culture, and agency of the individuals involved, which impact how and why the participant-deans engage or do not engage in succession planning.

### KEYWORDS

Succession planning; academic libraries; flat organizational structures; structure, culture, and agency; library leadership; library management

## Background

A variety of factors have contributed to a professional crisis in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS). This crisis involves a high number of upper and middle management positions opening in the past five years and an underqualified applicant pool available to fill those positions. Financial strains brought on by downturns in the economy meant that many universities faced years of hiring freezes during which few to no new staff or faculty – including librarians – were hired (Arthur, 1998; Long & Sheehan, 2015). This lack of new hires for academic libraries, combined with an increasing average age for LIS students in the past twenty years, means that the entire library workforce has aged or “grayed” accordingly (Arthur, 1998; Long & Sheehan, 2015). In response to these substantial budget cuts and staffing reductions, many academic libraries have also undergone significant organizational restructuring that often resulted in

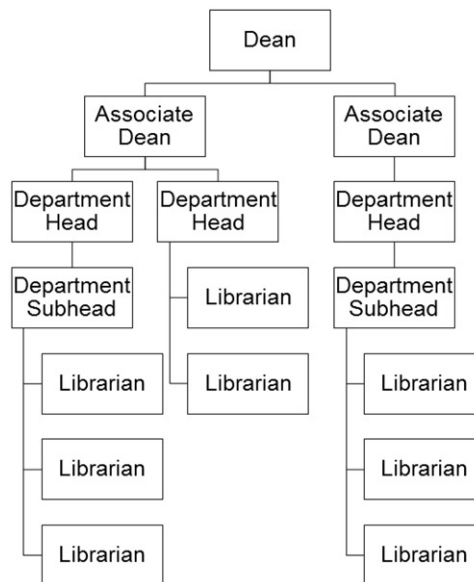
**CONTACT** Crystal Goldman  [clgoldman@ucsd.edu](mailto:clgoldman@ucsd.edu)  Instruction Coordinator/Associate Librarian, UC San Diego Library, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92093-0175, USA.

© 2019 The Author(s). Published with license by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC

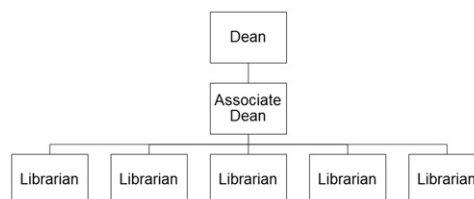
hierarchy flattening and, thus, fewer middle management positions (Feldmann, Level, & Liu, 2013; Lugg & Fischer, 2007).

In a flattened academic library hierarchy, all librarians report to an associate dean, or sometimes directly to the library dean, with no further management layers in the organizational structure (Braun, 2002; Moran, 2001; Sweeney, 1994). Managers in a flat structure have a high level of autonomy, but that also means they are more isolated from their superiors than those in tall organizational structures (Ghiselli & Siegel, 1972) (see [Figure 1](#) for an example of a tall hierarchy in an academic library and [Figure 2](#) for an example of a flat hierarchy in an academic library).

These substantial organizational and budgetary shifts took place over the past two decades, and many of the academic library leadership and management positions during this time were dominated by the most experienced (i.e., the oldest) librarians. Now that those librarians are beginning to retire, there are not enough qualified applicants with leadership education or experience to fill the management positions opening in the field. Indeed, several scholarly articles have pointed to the lack of adequate succession planning on the part of library administrators as a significant determinant in the present under-qualification crisis (Bridgland, 1999; Curran, 2003; Galbraith, Smith, & Walker, 2012).



**Figure 1.** Example of a tall academic library hierarchy.



**Figure 2.** Example of a flat academic library hierarchy.

## Literature review

In their article about succession planning in academic libraries, Webster and Young (2009) remarked that

Academic librarians often become leaders by being functional experts and gain initial experience in a specialty. Many are then called upon to play management and administrative roles for which they have not prepared and frequently do not desire. These frontline supervisory assignments may lead to success and advancement into a middle-management role. As a result, librarians often find that they have drifted into leadership roles and responsibilities without adequate preparation and must rely on instinct and adaptability to grow in these roles. Frequently, these early struggles lead to a loss of self-confidence and an unwillingness to seek additional leadership assignments. (p. 782)

This is especially true when confronted with the idea of taking on the role of senior library administrator. Many academic librarians see the hard work and sacrifice needed to succeed in upper administrative positions as simply not worth the potential rewards, which creates a serious problem for succession planning efforts, especially since this is an area in which academic libraries have historically struggled (Hall-Ellis & Grealy, 2013; Rowley & Roberts, 2008; Singer, Goodrich, & Goldberg, 2004; Webster & Young, 2009).

Succession planning requires a concerted, proactive effort to guarantee continuous and effective performance of a library, and “is a deliberate and systematic effort by an organization to ensure leadership in key positions and encourage individual advancement” (Bridgland, 1999, p. 21). Nixon (2008) further defines succession planning as “a strategy for developing leaders from within the company or organization” (p. 249). Succession planning should involve creating a strategic plan to assess the leadership knowledge and skills of current librarians, identify those who have potential to advance into more demanding leadership roles, and provide opportunities to develop that potential (Day, 2014; Murray, 2007). To that end, good succession planning should begin with recruitment of librarians who have high potential for future leadership (Fitsimmons, 2013). Effective succession planning provides a library organizational environment ready to respond to “sudden changes, critical backups, and individual development. Leadership can be dispersed throughout an empowered high-performance work team with the technical knowledge and experience required to pass on to successors for organizational stability” (Hall-Ellis & Grealy, 2013, p. 587).

Unfortunately, articles that discuss the need for succession planning often also point out where library administrators on the whole have not yet succeeded in putting this type of plan into action, and that failure to do so will come at great cost to the profession (Bridgland, 1999; Curran, 2003; Galbraith et al., 2012; Hall-Ellis & Grealy, 2013; Webster & Young, 2009). Curran (2003) mentioned that libraries had previously relied on recruiting experienced managerial candidates from other libraries as part of their succession plan, which is no longer a viable option given the shrinking pool of qualified candidates as the most experienced library leaders begin to retire.

Complicating the issue of succession planning in academic libraries is the inability or unwillingness for those in the profession to come to a consensus on core competencies needed in a library leader (Ammons-Stephens, Cole, Jenkins-Gibbs, Riehle, & Weare, 2009; Bryant & Poustie, 2001; Mason & Wetherbee, 2004). Multiple studies have been

conducted on attributes and competencies desirable in all levels of library leaders, from middle managers (e.g., department heads) to administrators (e.g., library directors or deans). None of these studies represent a formal competency model, and there continues to be a significant amount of variety in ideas for appropriate library-related leadership competencies. Generally, these studies provide different attributes and competencies that can include the abilities, knowledge, attitudes, skills, values, behaviors, and personal characteristics that leaders need in order to be successful in their positions (Bryant & Poustie, 2001; Hernon, Powell, & Young, 2002).

Articles describing desired library leader characteristics suggest that leaders need to be flexible, energetic, enthusiastic, empathetic, mature, wise, creative, courageous, risk-taking, self-confident, principled, credible, gregarious, articulate, results-oriented, determined, and possess a sense of humor (Hernon, Powell, & Young, 2001; Hernon et al., 2002; Jange, 2012; O'Connor, 2014; Sweeney, 1994; Wilkins Jordan, 2012). A deeper review of the scholarship that surrounds library leadership details the essential leader skills for librarians, including the need to be assertive and self-aware (Cottam, 1990), to communicate an overarching vision (Ammons-Stephens et al., 2009; Riggs, 1993; Wilkins Jordan, 2012), to be open to new ideas (Jange, 2012), to be innovative and problem-solving, to be technically and professionally competent, to be willing to delegate, to have the trust of library staff members (Hernon, Powell, & Young, 2004; Sheldon, 1991; Wilkins Jordan, 2012), to empower others (Sullivan, 1991), and to value people (Creth, 1988). Library leaders must also possess a high level of accountability, communication skills, political understanding, advocacy skills, planning, integrity, resource management, financial management, and customer service (Hernon et al., 2004; Wilkins Jordan, 2012), while at the same time they must display cognitive ability, interpersonal effectiveness, and managerial effectiveness (Ammons-Stephens et al., 2009).

All of these studies put forth different lists of potential competencies, many with marked overlap. Despite this sizeable body of work, the field does not yet have an accepted set or sets of core leadership competencies. Many LIS scholars have called for professional standards to be instituted for library leadership and management, and it would seem that such guidelines would do much to improve preparation and retention of new library managers and might assist in better succession planning (Mackenzie & Smith, 2011; Mason & Wetherbee, 2004; Matteson, Schlueter, & Hidy, 2013; Rooney, 2010; Tompson, 2006).

### **Problem statement**

Succession planning can be difficult even under ideal circumstances, but in the flatter and more flexible hierarchies of contemporary academic libraries, change is considered the norm and that can present additional challenges to creating realistic succession plans (Knight, 2009; Singer & Griffith, 2010). Other than acknowledging that these extra challenges exist, most of the research on this topic does not dwell on library organizational structures. In fact, the majority of the literature surrounding succession planning in libraries falls into a few notable categories, including the following:

- case studies that deal with succession planning in a single library (Murray, 2007; Singer, Goodrich, & Goldberg, 2004),

- descriptive quantitative or mixed method studies on leadership training and/or competencies that only tangentially discuss succession planning (Hall-Ellis & Grealy, 2013; Webster & Young, 2009),
- opinion or concept articles based on an extensive review of the existing literature surrounding library succession planning (Bridgland, 1999; Curran, 2003; Fitsimmons, 2013; Hall-Ellis, 2015), or
- reflective pieces that lament the dearth of literature on library succession planning (Nixon, 2008; Rowley & Roberts, 2008).

Only one study by Galbraith et al. (2012) directly addressed succession planning in more than one academic library; it reported the quantitative results of a survey that was completed by a human resources manager in each library ( $n = 34$ ) about opinions and practices regarding “specific succession planning principles” (p. 221).

What the LIS literature does is acknowledge the problem: that the leadership and management competencies expected of library administrators are both diverse and demanding, and that inadequate succession planning on the part of current library administrators has contributed to a shortage of qualified applicants for library administrator positions. What the literature lacks, then, is a study involving qualitative interviews that allows others to understand not just the behavior of library administrators/deans in regard to succession planning, but also the perceptions and context that makes this behavior meaningful.

## **Purpose and research questions**

The purpose of this study was to take an initial step in understanding how succession planning is perceived and addressed by individual library deans, particularly in light of the trend toward flattening hierarchies within library organizational structures. Thus, six library deans in California State University (CSU) academic libraries with flat organizational structures were interviewed for this study.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How important do the CSU library deans participating in this study perceive succession planning to be?
2. In academic libraries with a flat organizational structure, what strategies, if any, are these library deans using to succession plan?
3. To what extent, if any, does a flat organizational structure hinder succession planning in the academic libraries these deans head?

## **Methodology**

### ***Research design***

This study utilized a case study/cross-case analysis design in which each of the participant-deans were treated as a case that could provide insight into the issue of succession planning in academic libraries (Glesne, 2016; Stake, 2005). The case study/cross-case analysis design was appropriate given the lack of literature on this topic, and that the

research questions ultimately seek to uncover how and why participants address succession planning (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2009).

### ***Site selection and sampling strategies***

This study employed a combination of convenience and purposeful sampling strategies. Convenience sampling was used because each of the participant-deans was from a California State University, and California is also the state where the principal investigator (PI) resides. The sampling was also purposeful because all of the academic libraries on these campuses have the flat organizational structure that is a key component of this study. In other words, only deans in libraries with this type of hierarchy – or, rather, the absence of a great deal of hierarchy – were invited to participate in the study. This decision allowed the succession planning issue to be framed from the unique perspective of deans who have few or no middle managers to draw from as possible successors.

Given what was just stated, it should also be clear that the study employed one other sampling strategy: homogenous group sampling. The goal of this type of sampling is to “create an information-rich group that can reveal and illuminate important group patterns,” especially because all participants are very similar to each other, which helps focus the study on “the characteristics they have in common” (Patton, 2015, p. 267–268).

### ***Participant recruitment***

During recruitment, potential study participants were invited to participate via email. Recruitment took place in two stages. First, a mini-study was conducted with two deans; once two deans agreed to participate, the first stage of recruitment concluded. Preliminary findings were shared at a Library Science Symposium in June 2018, and then a second stage of recruitment began for four more participants, bringing the total number of participants to six (Goldman, 2018) (see [Appendix A](#) for a sample invitation-to-participate email).

It is important to note that the PI is a librarian at the University of California (UC), San Diego and was formerly a librarian at a CSU campus in northern California – San Jose State University. Thus, the PI has professional connections with librarians at a number of other institutions in California, including CSU campuses. Whenever possible in the participant recruitment process, a mutual colleague was asked to act as a go-between and send an introductory email to the PI and the library dean before the PI sent an invitation-to-participate email to the dean.

### ***Data collection procedures***

The primary means of data collection was semi-structured interviews lasting 60~90 min. While there was a predetermined set of questions for the interviews (see [Appendix B](#)), these questions are open-ended and were asked in a flexible way; they acted as a kind of discussion guide, and the interviews were intended to be more-or-less conversational. A secondary means of data collection was a short survey which asked

the participant-deans for basic demographic information about themselves and the librarians who work under them (see [Appendix C](#)).

Interviews were digitally recorded, and the recordings were transcribed using the transcription service Rev.com. The PI did not take notes during the interviews, but kept an electronic field journal to record observations, “ideas, reflections... [and] notes about patterns that seem to be emerging” immediately following each interview (Glesne, 2016, p. 296).

### **Data analysis procedures**

An inductive process was used to analyze the interview transcripts, PI’s field notes, follow-up emails between the PI and participants, as well as relevant documents pertaining to the CSU system (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). *A priori* codes were derived from the research questions and the interview guide, and the remaining focus of this process was on identifying emergent codes, extracting categories from the data, and assigning a code to each of the categories (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). Using the qualitative and mixed method analysis software, MAXQDA Analytics Pro, the PI first conducted a within-case thematic analysis for each participant-deans’ interview, email(s), and field notes, and, then, a cross-case analysis to compare similarities and differences in the coded data and discover what abstractions could be built across cases (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Ultimately, the PI conducted two cycles of coding on each case. The first cycle coding methods used were a combination of descriptive coding, which aligned with the *a priori* codes, and *in vivo* coding, which centers the participants’ voices and enhances understanding of their viewpoints (Saldaña, 2016). The second cycle coding method used was pattern coding, where the descriptive and *in vivo* codes and sub-codes were grouped by theme to reduce the complexity of the data to a manageable and understandable level (Saldaña, 2016).

### **Theoretical framework**

A framework with which to make meaning of the data became clear in the analysis process, that of structure, culture, and agency, which are “sociological concepts to describe the social construction of a phenomena” (Sleiman, 2018, p. 7). Indeed, Datnow, Hubbard, and Mehan (2002) point out that “structure, culture, and agency construct each other,” they “work reflexively,” and in “the agency of individuals we see structure and culture operating; in culture, we see structure and agency; and in structure, we see agency and culture” (p. 16). Understanding the intersections of structure, culture, and agency within and across these case studies gives a much fuller picture of how and why the participant-deans approach succession planning in their libraries (Archer, 2007; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Dutta, 2011; Hubbard, 1995).

### **Findings**

Data analysis revealed a number of similarities and differences between the participant-deans and their perspectives on and approaches to succession planning. All of the

participant-deans agreed that succession planning was very important, which may have been a driving reason behind their interest in participating in this study.

### **Participants and their libraries**

The six participants were given pseudonyms to protect their privacy (see [Figure 3](#)). Two of the six deans – Evelyn and Wendy – are Baby Boomers. The remaining four deans – Francesca, Erin, Hannah, and Walter – are Generation X, which lends credence to the library literature discussing the rising number of retiring Baby Boomers administrators. Each dean has at least sixteen years of professional experience working in libraries, and all but one – Hannah – holds a doctorate degree. All participant-deans are the head of a library in the CSU system, which is the largest public university system in the United States (CSU, 2018). As of the fall 2017 semester, this system has 23 campuses, educates 484,300 students, and employs over 52,000 faculty and staff (CSU, 2018).

All but one of the participant-deans is from campuses that would be classified as 4-year, large, primarily nonresidential public universities, based on the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (n.d.). This means that there is a full-time equivalent (FTE) “enrollment of at least 10,000 degree-seeking students at these bachelor’s or higher degree granting institutions. Fewer than 25% of degree-seeking undergraduates live on campus and/or fewer than 50% attend full time” (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, n.d., para. 20). The remaining participant-dean, Hannah, is on a campus that would be classified as a 4-year, small, highly residential public university, which means the enrollment is between 1000–3000 FTE and “at least half of degree-seeking undergraduates live on campus and at least 80% attend full time” (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, n.d., para. 14).

### **Structure**

There are several structural factors that help account for the behaviors and perceptions of participant-deans in regard to succession planning.

<i>Library Dean<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Age Range</i>	<i>Years as Dean</i>	<i>Years in Libraries</i>	<i>Tenured/ Tenure Track Librarians</i>	<i>Adjunct Librarians</i>
<i>Francesca</i>	35-44	4	28	14	4
<i>Erin</i>	45-54	2.5	23	22	6
<i>Hannah</i>	45-54	4	29	3	0
<i>Walter</i>	45-54	5	16	13	2
<i>Evelyn</i>	55-64	7	30-35	26	2
<i>Wendy</i>	55-64	3.5	27	27	2

1. Participants have been given pseudonyms

**Figure 3.** Information about participant-deans and their librarians.



### *Flat organizational hierarchies*

The flat hierarchy in CSU academic libraries is prescribed by the California Faculty Association (CFA) union contract that covers all faculty members, including librarians. The union contract is discussed in greater detail in the next section, but it is important to note that the participant-deans would not be permitted to reorganize their library hierarchy into a tall organizational structure, even if they felt that was a better structure for an academic library. Therefore, any strategies they might use for succession planning would always need to take the flat hierarchy into consideration.

All participants saw advantages and disadvantages in the flat hierarchy of their respective CSU libraries. Erin pointed out that

in the case of the California Faculty Association, they've done some wonderful things for the faculty, but in many ways they force us to put faculty-rank librarians into non-management positions, because of the agreement with the CSU that they need to report to an administrator, and an administrator is not a faculty person. So you can't be an administrator and a faculty member, and I think that really hurts.

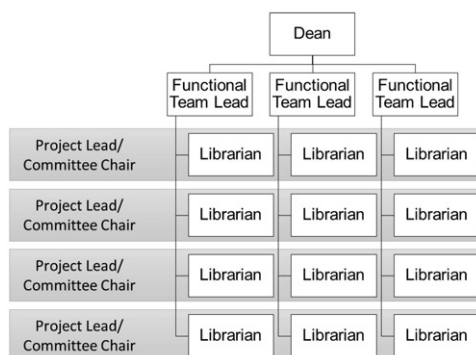
In terms of advantages, Evelyn noted that the flat hierarchy is tied to the fact that librarians are faculty, so “with the faculty model here, there's this opportunity to be more engaged across the campus because there are library faculty who are participating as equals [with other faculty members] across the campus on various committees. So that's a huge advantage.”

In regard to identifying high-potential librarians, Francesca stated that “I would say in a flat organization it's much easier to do.” She explained that, “first of all, you have to know what people want. Like, are there people that are interested in leadership opportunities?” Walter came to similar conclusions,

with the flat structure, you have librarians who are all pretty much at the same level. In some ways, it makes it easier to identify people that have [leadership] abilities, because you see the people that spontaneously step up to do things, as opposed to being appointed to a role.

Evelyn said that the disadvantage of flat hierarchies – or, rather, the advantage of tall hierarchies – is that “there are things that are easier in a more hierarchical structure, such as establishing performance standards and really dealing with disciplinary issues.” In a taller hierarchy, Evelyn found it easier to work at “building team capacity and having more shared leadership.” Having to formally supervise every librarian in her organization was something Francesca found “inefficient, at best,” and that Wendy claimed interfered with other critical aspects of her job duties, pointing out that “the reality is that 30% of my time is now expected to be ... directed towards fundraising. I can't fundraise if I have a flat organization and I have [so many] people reporting to me.” Francesca also noted that the flat hierarchy meant that “there are very few formal leadership roles in this organization. There are a lot of informal ... ones, like work lead.” Hannah tied the flat organization to succession planning by saying that “I think it [succession planning] would be a little bit easier if there were middle managers.”

In response to the challenges with their union-mandated flat organization structure, most of the participant-deans came to a similar solution, which was to build as much informal structure into their library as possible, while remaining technically within the



**Figure 4.** Example of a matrix academic library hierarchy.

bounds of the CFA collective bargaining agreement. They each overlaid a matrix hierarchy on top of their flat hierarchy. In a matrix organizational structure, there are few to no management layers between librarians and dean, but there are dual or multiple managerial lines of accountability or responsibility (Stuckenbruck, 1979). Typically, this means that there are functional teams or departments (e.g., collection development team) as well as committees and/or projects (e.g., professional development committee). Each of these teams, departments, committees, and/or projects would have a lead librarian, giving them more opportunities to build leadership skills (see Figure 4 for an example of a matrix hierarchy in an academic library).

### ***Collective bargaining agreement***

Because the participant-deans are from the CSU, the librarians on their campuses are represented by the California Faculty Association (CFA) union, and are thus covered by the same collective bargaining agreement (CFA, 2015). During the interviews, each dean expressed some frustration with the way that the union contract limited the strategies they could use for either succession planning or building leadership capacity within their librarians.

On many CSU campuses, the library is considered both a college and a department, and therefore has the right to elect a faculty department chair. However, not all library faculty choose to exercise that right, while others have successfully argued with their campus administration to have more than one department chair. Evelyn and Hannah both head libraries that do not have a librarian chair; whereas, Wendy, Erin, and Walter all head libraries with a single department chair. Meanwhile, in her effort to work within the “union contract structures to be able to have ... an appropriate level of hierarchy in the group,” Francesca has made the chair of each functional team a formal department chair under the terms of the union contract. While many CSUs consider the library a single department, the contract does not specify this, and Francesca’s approach to the contract made it possible for her library to have five department chairs, not just one. Walter mentioned that only one other CSU library he knows of has more than one department chair – CSU Northridge – where they have two department chairs.

To better understand the language that the participant-deans are working with, it is necessary to examine the current CFA contract. The area of the contract that pertains to the appointment of chairs says that:

20.30 Department chairs shall normally be selected from the list of tenured or probationary faculty employees recommended by the department for the assignment.

20.31 Such department chairs shall perform duties and carry out responsibilities assigned by the President.

20.32 Such department chairs shall be appointed by the President and shall serve at the pleasure of the President. (CFA, 2015, p. 85)

Therefore, with approval from the campus president, there does not seem to be a contractual reason why other CSUs could not make the case for the library having more than one department. The case would need to be made with the administration of each CSU, but only if the library dean and librarians on that campus felt it would be useful to have more department chairs.

### *State law definition of a supervisory employee*

There was, however, some disagreement among the participant-deans about whether or not a department chair would be technically considered a middle manager. Evelyn noted that “a chair would be more like a middle manager because a chair could assign work,” Francesca agreed that department heads “oversee department level work... So they have an administrative role,” but Wendy pointed out that chairs “aren’t HEERA supervisors” and so aren’t technically managers within the CSU system. The Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act (HEERA) is the state law that regulates labor relations between the UC and CSU systems, their employees, and the labor organizations that represent their employees (HEERA, 2013).

Again, a deeper look at the CFA bargaining agreement and the associated HEERA statutes reveal some fissures in the definition of managers. According to the CFA bargaining agreement:

1.2 The parties recognize that employees in the classifications listed in [Appendix B](#) of this Agreement and all other management, supervisory, and confidential employees as defined in HEERA are excluded from the bargaining unit...

1.5 The parties agree that all department chairs and department heads shall be included in the bargaining unit. (CFA, 2015, p.1)

Which means that the union contract specifically excludes all managers and supervisors except department chairs. That said, a look at HEERA provides the official definition of a supervisory employee, which again excludes department chairs.

#### 3580.3 Supervisory employee defined

“Supervisory employee” means any individual, regardless of the job description or title, having authority, in the interest of the employer to hire, transfer, suspend, lay off, recall, promote, discharge, assign, reward, or discipline other employees, or responsibility to direct them, or to adjust their grievances, or effectively to recommend such action, if, in connection with the foregoing, the exercise of such authority is not of a merely routine or clerical nature, but requires the use of independent judgment. With respect to faculty or

academic employees, any department chair, head of a similar academic unit or program, or other employee who performs the foregoing duties primarily in the interest of and on behalf of the members of the academic department, unit or program, shall not be deemed a supervisory employee solely because of such duties... (HEERA, 2013, para. 1)

Therefore, the union contract acknowledges that department chairs have an administrative role, but HEERA makes it apparent that they are not truly considered supervisors.

Why this distinction matters becomes clear when looking at the minimum job requirements for the associate dean of a CSU library (i.e., the lowest level of administration), Erin notes that “all of our associate deans have to have five years of administrative experience, which is defined by... [HEERA] as having people report to you.” In attempting to succession plan in academic libraries, the idea is to build leadership capacity and experience in librarians so that they might eventually qualify for a position in administration. The structures put in place by the CFA and HEERA make it impossible for a faculty librarian to ever qualify for administration. Wendy summed up the consequences of this, saying that “you can’t move into a manager position in the CSUs if you haven’t been a supervisor, but our union doesn’t allow librarians to be supervisors. So, in effect, it has taken away upward mobility.”

## **Culture**

Compounding the structural barriers to succession planning put in place by the union contract and HEERA, there are also cultural issues that make the transition from librarian to administrator a difficult one.

## **Faculty/administrator tension**

All of the participant-deans noted tension between faculty and administrators on their respective campuses. Evelyn found that “there’s more of an adversarial relationship between administrators and faculty at this institution than other places that I’ve been.” Hannah came to her current library with previous management experience and moved up from librarian to interim dean to dean, and she said that “sometimes it feels like a kind of evil empire thing with the administration. Like, yeah, you’ve joined the evil empire if you become a manager, if you’re not a faculty member anymore.”

Walter was the only participant who had worked in more than one CSU library – one as a librarian, another as associate dean, and his current library as dean – and he felt that this faculty/administrator tension existed on all three campuses. Indeed, he said that “a lot of faculty see managers as, you know, as being on the wrong side.”

This mistrust between faculty and administration is not limited to the CSU system, and has been noted in higher education in the United States. For example, Bean (2015) offered a personal essay about her experience moving from faculty to administration at Hartwick College in New York, losing professional friendships in the process, and dealing with open animosity from faculty. She makes clear this issue is larger than the CSU, saying, “Sadly, the nature of academe itself, with its intractable tension between faculty and administration, had rendered me an outsider, and I could never go back” to being a faculty member (Bean, 2015, para. 19). Not much seems to have changed since Baxter

(1993) discussed the differing communication codes used by these two subcultures of academia, pointing out the faculty subculture emphasized personal and egalitarian discussions that affirmed the individual self, while the administration subculture prioritized documenting interactions in writing in order to insure the rights and responsibilities of organizational members.

### *Transitioning to administration*

With an academic culture that often puts faculty in opposition with administration, it may be challenging to convince librarians to leave behind their faculty status to become administrators themselves. Erin said that “people have to be willing to make that leap from a tenured position into a precarious administrative position that is basically – although they don’t say it in the CSU – it is basically an annual appointment. I mean, at any time they could just say, you know, ‘sorry.’ And in some cases we can argue for retreat rights, but we don’t tend to do that for anyone below a dean position,” which would be problematic given that most faculty would begin their transition to administration in an associate dean role.

### *Hiring externally in academia*

Another area of culture that might make succession planning difficult is the tendency in academia to favor hiring outside candidates, thus making it less likely that a librarian could go from faculty to administrator within the same library (Richards, 2016). This is what Barden (2008) calls *internal-candidate syndrome*, where academic institutions are not confident that their internal candidate is more or less talented than outsiders, due to institutional isolation, as well as a general unwillingness by faculty to embrace succession planning. Barden (2008) also mentioned that part of this unwillingness is because succession planning is “in short, intentionality, favoritism, and special treatment... concepts [that] are then perceived to fly in the face of shared governance, academic freedom, and, of course, tradition (‘the way we have always done things’)” (para. 13).

Many of the participant-deans in this study mentioned a reliance on national searches for all of their positions – both librarian and administrative. Francesca thought these types of searches were important for several reasons, including fairness, a desire to increase the visibility of her library, and that she wanted “to have that balance of new voices and, you know, people who have been here for a long time.” On the other hand, Walter pointed out how such searches can make succession planning difficult because “somebody you have in mind, they’re going to step in after you, and then there’s a national search and they don’t get hired. So sometimes that can be problematic.”

Another factor in internal versus external hiring that Erin illuminated – cost of living – is perhaps more germane to California than to higher education, in general. She said that “we’ve also had people who we’ve hired from the outside that have moved on quickly, and it’s because of the cost of living, and really not for any other reason. So growing our own is especially important for us.”

## Agency

What became clear in interviewing the participant-deans is that both the structure and culture of the CSUs significantly impacted the deans' agency or actions in approaching and enacting succession planning strategies.

All of the deans were able to tie their flat organizational structure to the CFA union contract, and easily saw how this would influence succession planning. Evelyn said, "I think part of it is the contract and the collective bargaining agreements, and I do find those to be somewhat limiting [to succession planning]." Erin pointed out that the lack of formal middle management layers in the library hierarchy "is a huge hindrance, I think... we're too flat and, you know, there are opportunities for maybe *one* individual to move up" into an associate dean position. Trying to build leadership capacity by mentoring high-potential librarians was also problematic because librarians can't officially be supervisors, so discussing personnel issues had legal repercussions. Walter shed some light on this when he said "because the organization is flat, I can sort of see people that have management potential but I can't really always talk to them a lot about the more detailed things that come for managers."

Wendy had the most succinct description of the situation when she stated, "I don't think flat necessarily works... [for] succession planning. So there's the idea of how I would like to strategically plan and that's not possible." She added that "you cannot build people and guarantee them a [management] position, which is what succession planning is really dependent on in so many ways." She also summed up the final strategy that many of the participant-deans arrived at when dealing with a high-potential librarian, "should somebody want [to move into management]... they might have to go someplace else for a bit. And also I think it's good for people to move outside of the system and then come back to it with a more critical eye." She remarked that the same constraints on organizational structure were not part of the collective bargaining agreements for librarians in the UC system – because librarians do not have faculty status in the UCs, but are instead academic staff – so the taller structure means that librarians can gain the supervisory experience in the UCs needed to qualify for an administrative position in the CSUs. One reason both Erin and Francesca mentioned as specifically appealing for librarians to move between CSU and UC libraries to gain necessary experience, is that the retirement systems for public universities in California encourage employees to stay within the system, by (1) taking ten years to become vested, and (2) offering benefit incentives to those who remain in the system long-term. Though the CSUs and UCs technically have different retirement programs, they have made reciprocal arrangements for transfers between the two systems, so benefits gained from years of service would not be lost by librarians moving back and forth (CalPERS, 2017). In fact, one of the participant-deans, Wendy, took advantage of this reciprocal arrangement when she transitioned from the UC equivalent of a library associate dean to her present post as a CSU library dean.

## Administrative succession planning within the CSUs

One idea that did seem intriguing to several of the participant-deans was that of CSU systemwide library succession planning for those wishing to make the jump from

associate dean to dean. This would offer the benefit of candidates who have an insider's knowledge of the CSU system, as well as the benefit of an outsider's perspective on the individual campus.

To some extent, this is already happening within the system, only without the formal process of a succession plan. For example, Erin said that "we're doing this at the CSU, we're constantly doing it. You know, we just had an associate dean leave from Dominguez Hills to go to San Francisco" as a dean. Likewise, two of the participant-deans were associate deans or interim deans at a CSU library before becoming deans; however, it is important to note that both had managerial experience prior to being hired into the CSU system, so they could meet the required minimum qualification of five years of HEERA-defined supervisory experience. Walter explained that he "got the job as associate dean of San Jose State for five years, and I've been here for five years" as dean at his current campus. Hannah "became interim dean in the summer of 2014 ... [a]nd then I interviewed for the job and was appointed to the job three and a half years ago. So, I had a six month period of being interim."

Not all of the participant-deans were excited about the idea of collective succession planning within the library administrator ranks of the CSUs. Wendy expressed the most serious concern that this would be "like the Harvard grads feeding the Harvard grads, you continue to get a monoculture going through."

Taken together, it becomes apparent how structure, culture, and agency significantly impact the behaviors and perceptions of participant-deans vis-à-vis succession planning. While all the deans thought succession planning was important, their agency or actions were constrained by the culture of academia as well as the structure of California state law and the CFA collective bargaining agreement.

## **Limitations and significance**

### ***Limitations***

There are a few potential limitations to this study that need to be articulated here. First, this study dealt with only six academic libraries in public higher education institutions within a single university system in California. Attempting to make generalizations, in the traditional sense, about academic libraries in public higher education institutions would not be possible with this study. A less traditional approach to generalization will be discussed in the next section.

Furthermore, one should not discount the possible unwillingness of the participant-deans to fully divulge information about their institution or experiences, especially if that information might reflect negatively on them, their library, or their institution as a whole. A lack of "openness has the potential to create an unreliable study" (Klein & Salk, 2013, p. 343).

Another potential limitation is that the study includes only current academic library deans, and the perspective of former academic library deans might possibly produce more candid responses, particularly if their experiences were negative. That said, responses from former deans would also be somewhat outdated for the present job market and institutional environment. With a view toward voices that are not

included, it should also be noted that interviewing librarians and staff in the participant-deans' libraries is beyond the scope of this study; however, members of such groups might offer a significantly different perspective from those of their library dean.

As previously discussed, the PI is a member of the academic librarian community in California. This can be seen as both a limitation and an asset to the study. As a member of this community, the PI has a stake in the results of good or poor succession planning, given that an underqualified library dean would impact the productivity and success of the librarians who report to said dean. Obviously, the PI is attached to and concerned about the preservation of this librarian community – what Peshkin would refer to as the subjective *Community-Maintenance I* (Peshkin, 1988). And, thus, the PI would prefer other academic librarians in the state to be as productive and successful as possible. That said, as an academic librarian in California, the PI also understands this community, has knowledge of the shared traditions and vocabulary of this community, and may have had an easier time accessing potential participants because of preexisting connections to other librarians in the state.

### **Significance**

Given the aforementioned lack of literature on the subject of succession planning – particularly from the perspective of individual library deans – this study begins to fill that gap in LIS research. There is, however, a larger potential usefulness for this case study/cross-case study than just filling a literature gap. While the traditional understanding of generalization (i.e., drawing broad inferences about a certain population based on a sample subset of that population) would not be applicable in this study, there is some argument for the idea of generalization “rooted in a conception of experiential knowledge,” allowing readers to vicariously experience a different context that might enrich their current thinking about a case study topic (Donmoyer, 1990, p. 186). Hence, gaining insight about what perceptions academic library deans have and what their behaviors are in regard to succession planning could allow others in the LIS field to better understand their own perceptions and behaviors surrounding this crucial issue. Likewise, those in the LIS field might deepen their awareness of how structure, culture, and agency impact succession planning.

In a slightly different vein, what might be possible with this research is *transferability* rather than *generalizability*, which would allow those who read the findings of this study to decide for themselves if the findings are transferable to their particular context (Shenton, 2004). From that standpoint, this study might specifically be useful to other academic library deans, giving them insight into transferable strategies that the participant-deans are utilizing to succession plan.

### **Future research**

With such a dearth of literature on this topic, there is a clear need for further research, above and beyond a single study. Other populations could be approached, such as



deans, associate deans, or middle managers in academic libraries with tall organizational structures, all of whom would potentially influence library succession planning. Early- and mid-career librarians who might be considering moving into management positions would also be viable populations to consider, given that they would be the likely beneficiaries of succession planning. Taken together, these groups would provide a much fuller view of the perceived value of and the behaviors enacted toward succession planning in the LIS field, as well as the structure, culture, and agency that influence such succession planning efforts.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Lea Hubbard and Dr. Robert Donmoyer for guiding me through my first qualitative research project. Their mentorship was invaluable during this learning process.

## Funding

This work was supported by the Librarians Association of the University of California – San Diego (LAUC-SD) under a Research & Professional Development Grant.

## References

- Ammons-Stephens, S., Cole, H. J., Jenkins-Gibbs, K., Riehle, C. F., & Weare, W. J. (2009). Developing core leadership competencies for the library profession. *Library Leadership & Management, 23*(2), 63–74.
- Archer, M. S. (2007). Structure, culture and agency. In M. D. Jacobs & N. W. Hanrahan (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to the sociology of culture* (pp. 17–34). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Arthur, G. (1998). The ‘graying’ of librarianship: Implications for academic library managers. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 24*(4), 323–327. doi:10.1016/S0099-1333(98)90111-2
- Baxter, L. A. (1993). “Talking things through” and “putting it in writing”: Two codes of communication in an academic institution. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 21*(4), 313–326. doi:10.1080/00909889309365376
- Barden, D. M. (2008). The internal-candidate syndrome. *Chronicle of Higher Education, 54*(35), C2–C3. Retrieved from <https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Internal-Candidate/45809>
- Bean, K. (2015, August 25). Administrators are people, too. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/08/25/why-professors-shouldnt-view-administrators-such-disdain-essay>
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society and culture*. (R. Nice, Trans.). London, UK: Sage Publications. (Original work published 1970)
- Braun, L. W. (2002). New roles: A librarian by any name. *Library Journal, 127*(2), 46–49.
- Bridgland, A. (1999). To fill, or how to fill—That is the question: Succession planning and leadership development in academic libraries. *Australian Academic & Research Libraries, 30*(1), 20–29. doi:10.1080/00048623.1999.10755074
- Bryant, J., & Poustie, K. (2001). *Competencies needed by public library staff*. Gütersloh, Germany: Bertelsmann Foundation. Retrieved from: <http://uflibjobcompetencies.pbworks.com/f/Pub%20Lib%20Comp.pdf>
- California Faculty Association [CFA]. (2015). *Collective bargaining agreement (contract) 2014-2017, extended until June 2020*. Retrieved from [https://www.calfac.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/cfa\\_cba\\_2014-17\\_final\\_1.23.2015.pdf](https://www.calfac.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/cfa_cba_2014-17_final_1.23.2015.pdf)

- California Public Employees' Retirement System [CalPERS]. (2017). *A guide to CalPERS when you change retirement systems*. Retrieved from <https://www.calpers.ca.gov/docs/forms-publications/change-retirement-systems.pdf>
- California State University [CSU]. (2018). *2018 Fact book*. Retrieved from <https://www2.calstate.edu/csu-system/about-the-csu/facts-about-the-csu/Documents/facts2018.pdf>
- Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. (n.d.). *Size & setting classification description*. Retrieved from [http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/classification\\_descriptions/size\\_setting.php](http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/classification_descriptions/size_setting.php)
- Cottam, K. (1990). Professional identity and "intrapreneurial" behavior. In R. L. Albritton & T. W. Shaughnessy (Eds.), *Developing leadership skills: A source book for librarians* (pp. 141–150). Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Creth, S. D. (1988). Organizational leadership: Challenges within the library. In A. Woodworth & B. von Wahlde (Eds.), *Leadership for research libraries: A festschrift for Robert M. Hayes* (pp. 79–99). Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- Curran, W. M. (2003). Succession: The next ones at bat. *College & Research Libraries*, 64(2), 134–140. doi:10.5860/crl.64.2.134
- Datnow, A., Hubbard, L., & Mehan, H. (2002). *Extending educational reform: From one school to many*. New York, NY: Routledge/Falmer Press.
- Day, D. V. (2014). Leadership development. In A. B. Bryman, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson, & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of leadership* (pp. 37–50). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Donmoyer, R. (1990). Generalizability and the single-case study. In E. W. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry in education: The continuing debate* (pp. 175–200). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Dutta, M. J. (2011). *Communicating social change: Structure, culture, and agency*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Feldmann, L. M., Level, A. V., & Liu, S. (2013). Leadership training and development: An academic library's findings. *Library Management*, 34(1/2), 96–104. doi:10.1108/01435121311298306
- Fitsimmons, G. (2013). Collective succession planning in librarianship. *The Bottom Line*, 26(4), 142–143. doi:10.1108/BL-10-2013-0027
- Galbraith, Q., Smith, S. D., & Walker, B. (2012). A case for succession planning: How academic libraries are responding to the need to prepare future leaders. *Library Management*, 33(4/5), 221–240. doi:10.1108/01435121211242272
- Ghiselli, E. E., & Siegel, J. P. (1972). Leadership and managerial success in tall and flat organization structures. *Personnel Psychology*, 25(4), 617–624. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6570.1972.tb02304.x
- Glesne, C. (2016). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Goldman, C. (2018, June 13). *Succession planning in academic libraries with flat organizational structures*. Paper Presented at the American Association for the Advancement of Science – Pacific Division Annual Conference, Library Science Symposium, Pomona, CA.
- Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. E. (2012). *Applied thematic analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. doi:10.4135/9781483384436
- Hall-Ellis, S. D. (2015). Succession planning and staff development – A winning combination. *The Bottom Line*, 28(3), 95–98. doi:10.1108/BL-05-2015-0007
- Hall-Ellis, S. D., & Grealy, D. S. (2013). The Dreyfus model of skill acquisition: A career development framework for succession planning and management in academic libraries. *College & Research Libraries*, 74(6), 587–603. doi:10.5860/crl12-349
- Hernon, P., Powell, R. R., & Young, A. P. (2001). University library directors in the Association of Research Libraries: The next generation, part one. *College & Research Libraries*, 62(2), 116–145. doi:10.5860/crl.62.2.116

- Hernon, P., Powell, R. R., & Young, A. P. (2002). University library directors in the Association of Research Libraries: The next generation, part two. *College & Research Libraries*, 63(1), 73–90. doi:10.5860/crl.63.1.73
- Hernon, P., Powell, R. R., & Young, A. P. (2004). Academic library directors: What do they do? *College & Research Libraries*, 65(6), 538–563. doi:10.5860/crl.65.6.538
- Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act of 1978 (HEERA) (2013). *Calif. Stat. § 3580.3*. Retrieved from [https://www.perb.ca.gov/laws/statutes.aspx#ST3580\\_3](https://www.perb.ca.gov/laws/statutes.aspx#ST3580_3)
- Hubbard, L. A. (1995). Academic achievement among minority students: The effects of institutional mechanisms and student ideology (Doctoral dissertation). University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, CA.
- Jange, S. (2012). Preparing LIS professionals for leadership. *Library Philosophy and Practice*. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/685/>
- Klein, M. F., & Salk, R. J. (2013). Presidential succession planning: A qualitative study in private higher education. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 20(3), 335–345. doi:10.1177/1548051813483836
- Knight, J. (2009). The contemporary library and information services manager: Skills and knowledge requirements. *Business Information Review*, 26(1), 51–56. doi:10.1177/0266382108101308
- Long, V., & Sheehan, L. (2015, March). *Sustaining library faculty: The elephant is big and gray and is in the library*. Paper presented at the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Conference, Portland, OR. Retrieved from [http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org/acrl/files/content/conferences/confsandpreconfs/2015/Long\\_Sheehan.pdf](http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org/acrl/files/content/conferences/confsandpreconfs/2015/Long_Sheehan.pdf)
- Lugg, R., & Fischer, R. (2007). Lead, follow, or get out of the way: Management successions in libraries. *Against the Grain*, 19(2), 84–85. doi:10.7771/2380-176X.5079
- Mackenzie, M. L., & Smith, J. P. (2011). How does the library profession grow managers? It doesn't—they grow themselves. In A. Woodsworth (Ed.), *Advances in librarianship* (pp. 51–71). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited. doi:10.1108/S0065-2830(2011)0000033006
- Mason, F. M., & Wetherbee, L. V. (2004). Learning to lead: An analysis of current training programs for library leadership. *Library Trends*, 53(1), 187–217.
- Matteson, M. L., Schlueter, E., & Hidy, M. (2013). Continuing education in library management: Challenges and opportunities. *Library Management*, 34(3), 219–235. doi:10.1108/01435121311310905
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Moran, B. B. (2001). Restructuring the university library: A North American perspective. *Journal of Documentation*, 57(1), 100–114. doi:10.1108/EUM000000007079
- Murray, A. (2007). Growing your own: Developing leaders through succession planning. *Liber Quarterly*, 17(3–4). doi:10.18352/lq.7886
- Nixon, J. M. (2008). Growing your own leaders: Succession planning in libraries. *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship*, 13(3), 249–260. doi:10.1080/08963560802183229
- O'Connor, S. (2014). Leadership for future libraries. *Library Management*, 35(1/2), 78–87. doi:10.1108/LM-06.2013-0047
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity—One's own. *Educational Researcher*, 17(7), 17–21. doi:10.3102/0013189X017007017
- Richards, R. C. (2016). *Succession planning in higher education: The influence of culture on the succession process in a community college* (Doctoral Dissertation). Mercer University, Macon, Georgia.
- Riggs, D. (1993). Managing quality: TQM in libraries. *Library Administration & Management*, 7(2), 73–78.

- Rooney, M. P. (2010). The current state of middle management preparation, training, and development in academic libraries. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 36(5), 383–393. doi: [10.1016/j.acalib.2010.06.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2010.06.002)
- Rowley, J., & Roberts, S. (2008). The reluctant leader? Leadership and the information profession. *Library & Information Update*, 7(7/8), 52–54.
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Sheldon, B. (1991). *Leaders in libraries: Styles and strategies for success*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22(2), 63–75. doi:[10.3233/EFI-2004-22201](https://doi.org/10.3233/EFI-2004-22201)
- Singer, P., Goodrich, J., & Goldberg, L. (2004). Your library's future. *Library Journal*, 129(17), 38–40.
- Singer, P., & Griffith, G. (2010). *Succession planning in the library: Developing leaders, managing change*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.
- Sleiman, A. (2018). *Performance feedback: How structure, culture, and agency affects feedback* (Doctoral Dissertation). University of San Diego, San Diego, CA.
- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 443–466). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Stuckenbruck, L. C. (1979). The matrix organization. *Project Management Quarterly*, 10(3), 21–33. Retrieved from <https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/matrix-organization-structure-reason-evolution-1837>
- Sullivan, M. (1991). A new leadership paradigm: Empowering library staff and improving performance. *Journal of Library Administration*, 14(2), 73–85. doi:[10.1300/J111v14n02\\_06](https://doi.org/10.1300/J111v14n02_06)
- Sweeney, R. T. (1994). Leadership in the post-hierarchical library. *Library Trends*, 43(1), 62–94.
- Tompson, S. R. (2006). Competencies required! For education, recruitment, and retention. *Science & Technology Libraries*, 27(1/2), 241–258. doi:[10.1300/J122v27n01-16](https://doi.org/10.1300/J122v27n01-16)
- Webster, D. E., & Young, D. J. (2009). Our collective wisdom: Succession planning and the ARL research library leadership fellows program. *Journal of Library Administration*, 49(8), 781–793. doi:[10.1080/01930820903396764](https://doi.org/10.1080/01930820903396764)
- Wilkins Jordan, M. (2012). Developing leadership competencies in librarians. *IFLA Journal*, 38(1), 37–46. doi:[10.1177/0340035211435074](https://doi.org/10.1177/0340035211435074)
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

## Appendix A: Sample Invitation-to-Participate Email

Dear (academic library dean),

I am conducting interviews as part of a research study to increase understanding in the Library and Information Science (LIS) field of how succession planning is perceived and enacted by library deans in academic libraries with relatively flat organizational structures. As an academic library dean, you are in an ideal position to provide valuable first-hand information from your own perspective.

The initial interview would take between 60–90 min and is intended to be fairly informal. I would like to capture your general perceptions regarding succession planning as well as any strategies you might be using to succession plan in your library. While the interview would be recorded, your responses to the questions will be kept confidential. Each interviewee will be assigned a pseudonym to help ensure that personal identifiers are not revealed during the analysis and write-up of findings.

There is no compensation for participating in this study. However, your participation will be a valuable addition to LIS research, and findings could lead to greater understanding of perceptions and behaviors surrounding the issue of succession planning.

If you are willing to participate, please suggest a day, time, and location that is convenient for you and I'll do my best to be available. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Thank you,  
Crystal Goldman

## Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

1. Can you tell me a bit about your career arc and how you came to be the dean of this library?
2. Reflecting on the work that you do, are there any particular competencies, knowledge, skills, or abilities that you think are crucial for success in the role of library dean?
3. How would you identify a librarian who might have the leadership or management potential to eventually become a library dean?
4. In general, how important do you think succession planning is in an academic library?
5. In general, what factors support or hinder succession planning in an academic library?
6. Have you employed any specific succession planning strategies during your time as library dean?
7. In what ways do you think the organizational structure of an academic library (flat or tall) impacts succession planning?
8. Has the flat organizational structure of your library had any influence over your succession planning strategies?
9. Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

## Appendix C: Demographic Survey about Participant-Deans and Their Librarians

1. What is your age range?
  - a. 18–24 years old
  - b. 25–34 years old
  - c. 35–44 years old
  - d. 45–54 years old
  - e. 55–64 years old
  - f. 65–74 years old
  - g. 75 years or older
2. How long have you worked in the library field?
3. How long have you been the dean of your library?
4. Is this your first library dean position?
  - a. If no, for how many other libraries have you been dean?
5. How many full-time librarians are employed in your library?
6. How many of the librarians in your library would be considered middle managers?
7. Do you also employ part-time or adjunct librarians?
  - a. If so, how many?
8. How would you describe the career status of the majority of your full-time librarians?
  - a. Early-career
  - b. Mid-career
  - c. Late-career
  - d. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Copyright of Journal of Library Administration is the property of Taylor & Francis Ltd and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.