Writing our Story: Building a Community of Practice for Library Managers from within
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**Backstory**

**Equity in the Ranks:**
In 2016, a two-day Management Training and Community Building event was conducted for this public, academic libraries’ middle managers (non-librarian/faculty). This interactive training addressed managerial skills such as meeting facilitation, analysis and decision.

**Diverging Plots**

**Unique Path:**
As a new community of practice, the steering committee was interested in how the LMMCT compared with other institutions’ similar programs, and where we could learn from each other.

HR representatives from three institutions answered the email request sent by UF’s

**Characters**

**Membership:**

**Character Growth**

**Our Meetings:**
Since our initial meeting in February 2018, we have held 11 meetings/trainings including:
- Colab: Facilitated session where members were able to become better acquainted with one another
- Bio workshop: Hands-on training to create/enhance individual biographies to be

**Plot Twists**

**Buy-in and Participation:**

**Next Chapters**

**Continued Assessment:**
Review topics of interest for the group to implement trainings
- Technical: grants, budgets, conflict resolution
- Professional: attending/presenting at conferences, updating position descriptions, research/writing

**Specialist Presentations:**
Sharing what we do
Backstory

**Equity in the Ranks:**

In 2016, a two-day Management Training and Community Building event was conducted for this public, academic libraries’ middle managers (non-librarian/faculty). This interactive training addressed managerial skills such as meeting facilitation, analysis and decision-making, and managing conflict. The idea behind this session was to provide skills to this often-overlooked cohort, and create a community of practice for the participants.

This grant-funded course was sponsored by University of Florida Libraries’ administration, including staff from Library HR and an Associate Dean. The full-day sessions were facilitated by an external trainer brought in specifically for this group.

![Image of participants in training session]

[Members of the two-day training provide feedback on the experience!]

In 2017 the group reconvened under the guidance of library HR, and members determined they wanted to reignite the group, this time with a peer-led, monthly model. Three members stepped forward to get the group off the ground, and a faculty librarian stepped up to be the group’s liaison to library administration. Thus, in January 2018, the Library Middle Management and Leadership Team came into being.
Characters

The Library Middle Management and Leadership Team (LMM/LLT) is comprised of supervisors, project managers, team leaders and/or unit heads. Middle Managers usually have people above, below or beside them and are in charge of the supervision of people or processes, or both. Responsibilities involve managing a discrete functional area or some form of a library’s daily operation. The members are library staff, as opposed to faculty librarians, who have their own support.

Steering Committee:

Three group members took it upon themselves to get the newly envisioned community of practice off the ground. They have the help of the training program manager, a faculty mentor, and the HR assistant program director, who all help ensure communication between the LMM/LLT and upper library administration, as well as the development of programming desired by the group.
Character Growth

Our Meetings:
Since our initial meeting in February 2018, we have held 11 meetings/trainings including:

- **Colab:** Facilitated session where members were able to become better acquainted with one another
- **All workshop:** Hands-on training to create/enhance individual biographies to be shared on our group’s Basecamp to serve as points of information access
- **Specialists presentations:** Members share details about their job tasks of their respective departments/units
- **Process documentation overview:** Several members demonstrated techniques for documenting workflows in their departments/units
- **Communications training:** 3-hour session taught by external trainer, focused on best practices

Tools:

![screencaps of the LMMLT Basecamp & LibGuide sites]

Basecamp: Utilized to share contact information, meeting notes, and feedback within the group.

LibGuide: Being constructed to share information about the group with the greater library community.

Trello/Air Table: Group expressed a need for this type of platform, request went up for library-level consideration.

Employee Recognition:
Hosted a luncheon in acknowledgement of the group’s first year and accomplishments. Lunch was funded by the Libraries’ Employee Recognition Committee.

![LMMLT members enjoying the recognition luncheon]
**Plot Twists**

**Buy-in and Participation:**

![Bar Chart: Meetings and Workshops]

- [Attendance compared to total membership numbers for each LMMLT meeting]

**Work hours:** limitation for individuals based on different work schedules
- Day timers vs. overnighters
- Front line staff with no backup

**Accessibility:** meeting attendance is impacted by various factors:
- work hours
- other meetings/contrlicts
- large campus membership dispersed

- To help, we have implemented use of Zoom for live-streaming, sharing recordings of meetings.

- [Screencap of Processes For Documentation workshop held via Zoom]

**Group Engagement:** participation increased when:
- Training/meetings were hands-on
- New members were added to group

Specialists’ presentations provide members the chance to learn about others’ responsibilities. Presenters also get the opportunity to develop/enhance their presentation skills.
**Diverging Plots**

**Unique Path:**

As a new community of practice, the steering committee was interested in how the LMMLT compared with other institutions' similar programs, and where we could learn from each other. HR representatives from three institutions answered the email request sent by UF's HR assistant program director. The steering committee spoke with each on the phone, trying to determine where our group was unique.

**Forging our own way:**

In comparison with the three institutions who spoke with us, UF is unique in the fact that the group is peer-led, and that membership is limited to staff positions as opposed to being open to every library worker who supervises staff.

All groups held discussions among the members, though only the LMMLT and the Supervisor's Round Table also had a strong element of professional development workshops/classes.

One group, the Library Management Council, is no longer active. The representative indicated this was due to a change in the membership and other programs, and ultimately lack of vision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Group</th>
<th>Library Middle Management and Leadership Team</th>
<th>Library Management Council</th>
<th>Supervisors Round Table</th>
<th>&quot;Sponsored Program&quot; (no further detail)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>University of Florida, SC public RL</td>
<td>NE, public RL</td>
<td>NE, private RL</td>
<td>NE, private RL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who participates?</td>
<td>Supervisors; Project Managers; staff only</td>
<td>Initially supervisory front-line staff</td>
<td>Moved to all Middle Management</td>
<td>Supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Members</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>(no data)</td>
<td>(no data)</td>
<td>45-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development aspect?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many attend workshops (avg)?</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>(not applicable)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>(no data)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions on relevant topics?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many attend discussions (avg)?</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(no data)</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>12-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting Frequency</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
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<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer lead</td>
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<td>(no-data)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Lead</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently active?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Comparison of LMMLT (left column, in orange) and 3 other managers groups]
Next Chapters

**Continued Assessment:**

Review topics of interest for the group to implement trainings

- **Technical**: grants, budgets, conflict resolution
- **Professional**: attending/presenting at conferences, updating position descriptions, research/writing

**Please rank the training topics in order of preference:**

- Budgets
- Grants
- Conflict Resolution
- March 2019: Communication
- Project Management
- Personnel management/supervision
- Progresses for documentations

[Survey results regarding interest in potential training topics]

**Receive feedback for steering members**

- What has worked?
- What needs improvement?

**Discuss next steps:**

- Revisit mission/vision
- Rotate leadership:
  - Keep 2 or 3 steering members
  - Rotate on an annual basis

**Implement new ideas:**

- Mentorship program
  - Peer-to-peer
  - Staff-librarian

**Group Engagement:**

- Establish regular meeting time
- Seek supervisors’ encouragement for their staff to attend