Words from the President

College libraries are nimble organizations focused on teaching and student learning. The membership of the College Libraries Section is a direct reflection of this. At the 2013 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, the CLS Executive Board spoke to several members about their expectations for the section. Many college librarians view the section as a place to develop a network of colleagues who face similar challenges. Collib-I is mentioned as a great resource for sound advice from the non ARL voice. In general the membership is seeking practical advice on a variety of topics and looks to the section to provide opportunities to explore those issues. College librarians need to solve their current problem and move on to the next one. Members would like the section to focus on the work of libraries and not get bogged down focusing on the work of the section.

“The CLS Executive Board voted to eliminate the in person all committee meeting which is held at the annual conference. Committee work can be accomplished virtually so conference attendance is no longer required.”

The CLS Executive Board will spend the Fall of 2013 creating a strategic plan, and looking at the section’s committee structure. We are seeking to ensure that our
Words from the President cont...

committee structure meets the current needs of our membership. The work will be completed at the 2014 Midwinter Meeting, so that the structure will be in place before the 2014-2015 committee appointments begin. In other words, the work of the section will be completed quickly so that the section can focus on the work of libraries. The Board is also aware that many members would enjoy participating on a committee, but cannot commit to annual conference attendance. ALA no longer lists conference attendance as a requirement for committee involvement. Thus the CLS Executive Board voted to eliminate the in person all committee meeting which is held at the annual conference. Committee work can be accomplished virtually so conference attendance is no longer required. We hope this provides an opportunity for more members to become involved with the work of the College Libraries Section. The committee volunteer form will be available December 1, 2013 to February 15, 2014. Please consider volunteering for a CLS committee. Erin Smith, CLS Vice-Chair, will begin making committee appointments after February 15th.

Hopefully I will have the opportunity to see some of you at the Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia. CLS will be hosting two discussion groups. The Medium-Sized Academic Libraries Discussion Group talks about matters of importance to medium-sized libraries. The Leadership and Management Issues in College Libraries Discussion Group is for people interested in leadership and management issues. Details about the day, time, and topic of each discussion group will be available shortly before the conference.

If you have any suggestions for improving the committee structure of CLS or any questions about the section in general, feel free to contact me at sally-gibson18@gmail.com.

Member Updates

The four of us were honored to participate in the American Library Association’s (ALA) Emerging Leader program. The program spans a six-month period, beginning during Midwinter conference and culminating in a poster session at Annual conference. During the program, we listened to the ALA president, chief executive officer, board, and other ALA VIPs describe our professional organization, frequently suggesting ways to become more involved. Our facilitator, Kathryn Deiss, shared insights about the traits of leadership and leaders. Equally important, we fostered nationwide relationships with other new library professionals. The Emerging Leaders program was a rewarding experience, on the whole. We especially appreciated the opportunity to learn the importance of leadership and collaboration through applied practice.

Our project goal was to develop recruitment tools that communicate the benefits of college librarianship and CLS membership. To gain an understanding of our target groups, our group administered two brief informational surveys for college librarians and recent graduates, respectively.
These surveys garnered a wide array of perspectives, the majority of which expressed interest in and support of college librarianship. Our group used the survey responses to create a video, brochures, elevator pitch, and poster espousing the benefits of college librarianship. While researching our project, our group noticed a lack of scholarly and trade literature focused upon college librarians. We plan to further investigate this topic and publish an article sharing our discoveries.

Our survey results show that college librarianship is an excellent place to both begin and continue a library career. Those graduate MLIS/MLS students who have not already focused upon another specialization were very receptive to the idea of working within a college library. Many respondents spoke of a transformative experience while in college that led them to pursue librarianship, while others cited work-related reasons like the population served, environment, and focus. Responses from college librarians were primarily positive—even when asked to report challenges they encounter—highlighting the many enjoyable, exciting activities taking place in higher education.

We presented our project results at the Emerging Leaders poster session during this year’s ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. Thanks to effective session marketing our event was well attended by librarians from all over the country. All reactions and conversations were positive. Many people we interacted with asked questions and expressed interest in CLS.
We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to CLS and especially to our liaison, Sally Gibson! Sally took her position seriously, her continued contact and advice was invaluable. When our project was nearing completion, she served as a conduit for communication with the CLS board. Also impressive was the open and inviting nature of CLS. Our group was lucky enough to join the CLS Friday Night Feast, by invitation. We greatly enjoyed the meal and excellent company!
At this past spring’s annual meeting of the Alabama Library Association, Eric A. Kidwell, Director of the Library/Professor at Huntington College, served as moderator and panelist for a session titled “Library Advocacy: Personal Reflections from the Academy,” sponsored by the Alabama Association of College & Research Libraries Government Relations Committee, which Kidwell chairs. Additionally, he presented “A LibGuide Alternative to the Traditional Student Research Requirement,” as part of the Best Practices session sponsored by the College, University, & Special Libraries Division of the Alabama Library Association. In May, Kidwell expanded upon this presentation for an international “SpringyCamp” virtual conference sponsored by Springshare. This virtual conference included over 1500 attendees and presenters from 21 countries. Kidwell was one of five presenters for the first day general session, which focused on innovation with Springshare products. In his presentation he discussed how he and a colleague, Dr. Maureen Murphy, Professor of Chemistry at Huntingdon, had used LibGuides as an alternative student research assignment in an Australia travel seminar/trip they led in spring 2012. As part of his presentation, he shared with conference attendees a number of the LibGuides created by their students.

As the ACRL Liaison to the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), I will be attending CIC’s Chief Academic and Chief Student Affairs Officers Institute, to be held in Pittsburgh, PA, November 2-5. I will give a presentation on “The Evolving Academic Library” and highlight current and emerging factors that impact academic libraries, the broader context in which our libraries operate, and related implications for library resources, services, and personnel. I will reference ACRL’s 2013 Environmental Scan. I will also highlight opportunities for academic libraries to collaborate with student affairs offices.
The College Library Section’s Annual Friday Night Feast was held in Chicago at Brazzaz, an authentic Brazilian Steakhouse. The CLS diners experienced a gourmet salad bar, and were continuously served 18 of the finest fire roasted selections of Angus beef, lamb, poultry, pork and jumbo shrimp all prepared in the delicious, artful, culinary style of the Gaucho.

Thanks to the very generous support from EBSCO Information Services, 55 attendees were able to enjoy this delicious meal for a low cost. Steve O’Dell and Steve Strother represented EBSCO Information Services and joined in the evening’s feast. The event is always an enjoyable and relaxing way to network with your colleagues. Everyone who attended went away with their culinary appetites satisfied. Watch for information about the upcoming 16th Annual College Library Section’s Friday Night Feast to be held at ALA in Las Vegas in the spring 2014 CLS Newsletter!