

Professional Values Statement

An Analytical Essay

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Introduction

Many thought provoking questions have been asked and pondered during the Foundations of Library and Information Science course. These questions have been a challenge for me to not only think about but to also relate within my personal life what I hope to accomplish academically and professionally. Recently my daughter was inducted into the National Junior Honors Society. During her induction, students pledged to "maintain and encourage high standards of scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship" (National 47). Upon reflecting on the many ideals and principles of the Library and Information Science field presented during this class, I believe my professional values are reflected within this statement.

Scholarship

Scholarship, to me, is the skill or condition of learning. I am a LIS student to learn about librarianship. Learning is, as it should be, a life-long endeavor. I am committed to expanding my knowledge on a professional as well as a personal level. As a professional, I have a responsibility to learn and continue to expand my level of knowledge. We live in an ever-changing technological information world. John Feather expressed in his book, *The Information Society*, that the use of information technology has changed the library and the task of the librarian, insomuch as librarians have learned and developed many new techniques and skills to meet the changing demands of both the user and the technology (196). Feather goes on to say that there will be further challenges needed to be faced (196). In order to be successful in my profession, I must continue to value learning, having a desire to expand my level of knowledge, and to be open-minded to new ideas.

Leadership

The ability to take responsibility for ones actions and to set an example for others is leadership. In order to be a valued professional, I must be able to take responsibility for my actions. I also must set an example of good moral conduct and professionalism to those I work with, those I work for, and those I serve. I not only have a responsibility to perform my duties to the best of my ability, I have a responsibility to conduct myself in a manner that is most fitting for the situation without compromising my own high standards of morals and ethics. In her article on information ethics, Roberta Brody quoted Mark Twain as having once written, "To be good is noble; but to show others how to be good is nobler and no trouble" (41). In order to maintain and encourage high standards, I personally must demonstrate those high standards through honesty, fairness, and moral conduct with initiative. Through the value of leadership, I will take the initiative to go beyond what is simply required of

me and avail myself wherever I can to be part of the solution. As a professional, I have a responsibility to act, think, and make decisions based on my own personal belief system as an example to others.

Service

Service has many meanings. Service is associated with what one does as well as what one does for others. Service is not just an act of doing for others; service is also an attitude toward others. Having an attitude toward helping others as well as an attitude toward doing the best I can at the task before me is serving. Feather emphasized a change, beginning in the 1970's, which began with the recognition that the user, rather than the source, has primacy (191). Therefore, I have a responsibility to treat others with respect, whether it is in my professional or personal forum. Feather also notes that "quality of service is measured by speed and accuracy of the fulfillment of the user's demands" (191). It is my personal belief that providing quality service through task performance as a professional, as well as through my attitude toward those in which I serve, are values I need to continually express.

Citizenship

Citizenship is similar to service in that it has more than one connotation. Citizenship not only encompasses respecting the laws of the state and nation I live in, but also includes respecting those who share my community, state, and nation. I have a responsibility to uphold the laws by which I am governed as much as I have a responsibility to uphold the rights and dignity of others. John Stuart Mill points out in his book *On Liberty* that "mankind's well-being depends on the freedom of opinion and the freedom of the expression of opinion" (50). In regards to respecting the rights and dignity of others, I must also respect the opinions and interests of others without prejudice, accepting their uniqueness and diversity.

Character

Character is the essence of what makes each one of us unique. W.C. Berwick Sayers, author of the introduction to Ranganathan's *The Five Laws of Library Science*, said that "a log with a book at one end and a librarian at the other made a perfect library" because it is the librarian that brings vitality to a library through the personal element (xxx). In order to be a valued professional, my character must contain value. A valued character has moral integrity as well as wit and charm at its core. Therefore, I have a responsibility to conduct myself in a manner that expresses who I am in the most becoming way without jeopardizing my personal beliefs.

Conclusion

In the introduction to Ranganathan's *The Five Laws of Library Science*, Sayers also describes a librarian as one who has an acquisitive mind not closed to any subject of human interest, one who is always a learner, one always awake to and welcoming the development of human thought and adventure of the human spirit, one who is educated not only in the general sense but also in every operation and process of the library, and one who is a lover of other men (xxxi). I believe my professional values of scholarship, leadership, service, citizenship, and character encompass this description. As one who has "an acquisitive mind not closed to any subject of human interest," I exemplify the values of citizenship, scholarship, and character. As one who is "always a learner", I value scholarship. As one who is "always awake to and welcoming the development of human thought and adventure of the human spirit," I value scholarship, character, and citizenship. As one who is "educated not only in the general sense but also in every operation and process of the library," I demonstrate scholarship, leadership, and service. As one who is "a lover of others," I value citizenship and service.

Based on my personal values and beliefs, I feel scholarship, leadership, service, citizenship, and character are each a needed component to my professionalism. In each situation, I will need to draw on these values in one way or another. Not every situation will require an equality of these values. For some situations, a different level of one value or another may be more necessary. Therefore, it is difficult at this point to determine which is more vital. However, I believe I would not be successful if I did not possess them all.

Works Cited

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