Wading in before Diving in: Preparing Library Students for Professional Participation

Thielen, Joanna; Stuit, Martha
What is QuasiCon?

**What:** Unconference + professional-like conference = QuasiCon

**Who:**
- **Host:** American Library Association (ALA) student chapter
- **Attendees:** Library and Information Science (LIS) students and professional librarians

**When:** Annually in February, since 2012

**Where:** University of Michigan School of Information (UMSI), Ann Arbor, MI

**Theme for 2016:** What Libraries Can Do for You!

### Benefits of a student-led conference

#### For library students

- **As presenters**
  - Learn to submit a conference proposal
  - Prepare visual aids; practice presenting
  - Experience presenting and addressing audience questions
  - Add presentation to their CVs

- **As attendees**
  - Choose among conference sessions
  - See a model for professional presentations
  - Gather ideas for their own presentations and projects
  - Network with professional librarians
  - Interact with professional organizations

- **As members of the Planning Committee**
  - Develop valuable skills: marketing, fundraising, proposal evaluation, event planning, project management, and service work

#### For professional librarians

- **Keynote speaker:** Jennifer Taggart, Assistant Head of Youth Services at Bloomfield Township Public Library and Library Journal Mover & Shaker

- **Presentation:** Creating inclusive programming and collections for patrons with special needs

- **Attendees participate in the scholarly conversation,** one of the frames in the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education.

- **QuasiCon is free and open** to the public. Held at UMSI, the conference is accessible to all UMSI students.

### Lessons learned

- Create a diverse Planning Committee. Each member brings unique strengths, experiences, and professional network.
- Send targeted requests, which yield more responses than blanket email requests.
- Provide food for attendees, including those with dietary restrictions. Ending the day with cake has been a hit.
- Pick swag that adds value to the conference.
- Build a support network.
- Assess the impact of the conference by gathering attendee feedback.
- Collect suggestions for improvement from the Planning Committee members.

### Acknowledgements

- ALA student chapter at UMSI
- QuasiCon’s founders (UMSI graduate students during the 2011-12 academic year)
- Members of the Planning Committee
- All attendees

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### QuasiCon 2016 by the numbers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Librarians</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Keynote Speaker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning Committee Members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Months of planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bagels</td>
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<td>Sheet cakes</td>
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<td>Cups of coffee and tea</td>
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