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

Thielen, Joanna; Stuit, Martha

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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!

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<th>Benefits of a student-led conference</th>
<th>QuasiCon 2016 by the numbers</th>
<th>Lessons learned</th>
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| **As presenters**
- Learn to submit a conference proposal
- Prepare visual aids; practice presenting
- Experience presenting and addressing audience questions
- Add presentation to their CVs
| **47 attendees**
| **27 presenters**
| **9 Planning Committee members**
| **5th annual conference**
| ✓ 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

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**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**

- Hear the range of interests of students
- Glimpse the current LIS curriculum
- Scout future talent for their library
- Recruit for professional organizations
- Share their expertise from the field
- Demonstrate professional engagement and lifelong learning
- UMSI alumni: Reconnect with their alma mater

**QuasiCon promotes...**

- **Diversity**
  - 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

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

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

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**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