

ILA 2009 Summary

Shannon Pohrte

I attended the ILA Conference in Peoria from Oct. 7-9th. Getting to network and explore some new topics at the conference was very rewarding and informative.

First and foremost, I was there to present at the 'Tackling Transitions in Library Careers' presentation on Thursday. Four librarians including me discussed career development, including changing status from student to professional and vice versa; crossing between library types and relocating; job hopping; tweaking the five year plan and adapting to different workplaces; and, conducting a job search during rough economic times. During this panel discussion, I shared tips on what career resources were available to librarians and some options that might not be well-known for job assistance. There were about 20-30 people in attendance.

Some of the other presentations I went to were 'Lifehacks: Using Technology to Work Smarter, Faster, and Better', 'High Impact Planning and Programming for a New Generation of Learners', and 'Here's the Evidence: Impacting Student Achievement'. I also thought Omar Wasow was a great speaker for the Opening General Session. He gave a very interesting viewpoint of how libraries as a place should be kept because no other architectural entity exists to do what libraries do. Getting viewpoint of a non-librarian was a nice change of pace from most of the presentations I normally see. Being in an academic library for the first time in my library career, I wanted to see the presentations that dealt with educating students.

I got some ideas on how we can revamp our educational program here at University of St. Francis from the 'High Impact Planning and Programming for a New Generation of Learners' presentation. One of the main points was to not only focus on bibliographic instruction but how to help the students learn how to use multimedia in their research efforts. Many students have the technological know-how to find these kinds of sort but not the ability to synthesize this information into a well thought-out research project. Gaming was also brought up as a teaching tool and the University of Western Illinois even does gaming programs for fun.

The Lifehacks presentation was interesting to see what is out there to increase productivity through online tools. Nanette Donohue was a riot to see go through over 60 different links to online tools that can help not only manage your online communication and life over all but also help increase your productivity. Often technology especially on the web can be helpful but it can also be a big distraction. So Nanette Donohue showcased about 60 different websites that could help you enge your time and productivity while making life easier overall

I also got to chat with some of my colleagues from the Prairie Area Library System. It was nice to catch up and also discuss issues with the library system and academic libraries now.

I thank Libras for enabling me to attend this conference with their funding. It was well worth the drive and time to take some time and learn some new things about libraries.