

Naomi Nelson
L-50: Special Collections Leadership Seminar
23–28 July, Charlottesville, Virginia

Narrative Course Evaluations

1) *Were the pre-course reading assignments useful? Are there any readings that you would like to see added or removed in future years?*

1. {no response}
2. They were very useful. I wish though, that they had been sent to us more in advance. When they were sent I was on vacation, and couldn't really make them.
3. Yes, the readings were great! I would like to see more readings by BIPOC professionals incorporated.
4. The readings were very useful and I see myself returning to them for reference and sharing with my team as relevant resources for our work.
5. Yes. I would like to have seen a few readings about the experience of BIPOC leaders.
6. The course reading assignments were useful. I appreciated having a lighter reading list. I think a suggested reading list could be of use but isn't required. Further readings were presented in class and noted in a shared document.
7. Readings were directly relevant to both the class and my job. They were made even more productive to my professional development because they were extremely concise and to the point, with an emphasis on frameworks of thinking and processes for work.
8. Yes, very useful.
9. I thought the readings were very useful and appreciated that they were brief.
10. The readings were very useful.
11. I found the readings accessible, pertinent and provided in a digestible amount. Recommend more case studies and work authored by BIPOC practitioners.
12. The pre-course reading and assignments were useful to our daily discussions. They were provided by the professor through a Google Drive folder, which was a great way to share information with the class and to have access as we were working on course assignments and activities. I will also refer back to the Google Drive folder when I am back at my home institution for reference.
13. Yes, I found the reading list to provide beneficial context to the lecture/seminar discussions and some I have already shared with my home institution. It was a digestible amount of reading for the week. I'd love to see more BIPOC authors/leaders cited in the future.

2) *What are your thoughts on the course workbook and/or other teaching materials distributed during class? Was the content appropriate and useful? Will it continue to be useful for you after the*

course?

1. {no response}
2. The case studies that NN distributed were very useful and the conversations they sparked were awesome.
3. The content was wonderful! I look forward to sharing it with my team.
4. We had various hand-outs with case studies and different scenarios that we discussed as a group, as well as additional resources about leadership styles that were useful. I plan to use these again.
5. All of the exercises were useful and thought-provoking. I appreciated that there were different scenarios for many exercises, so we were able to get different perspectives when each group reported back.
6. Everything distributed in class was useful. Content was appropriate and the group work/discussions were all of value. I greatly enjoyed the opportunity to work through scenarios/case studies with peers. I am not afforded such an opportunity outside of this course for such conversation.
7. Teaching materials in class were wonderful and productive. Many of them were case studies, which sparked great discussions.
8. I find the case studies very practical and educational.
9. The case studies were very fruitful for our discussions. I think the leadership competencies tools provided a lot of insight.
10. Yes, the content/teaching material is useful.
11. NN used a small group discussion format with case studies which was a highly practical and informative approach that allowed us to learn strategies from each other. Very useful and applicable to the different library settings I lead in, I am already thinking of several scenarios where the lessons could be applied.
12. The course teaching materials distributed in class and the suggested readings were very appropriate and useful to the course and I will be referring to them when I get back to work. I will also share the activities that were presented throughout the class with the University Library Dean, John Unsworth, especially the leadership style worksheet.
13. The case studies that were used to frame the small groups discussions were great, and helped facilitate skill sharing across peer institutions. I could see myself using some of the case studies and small group prompts in my own organization.

3) *Which aspects of the course were most intriguing and relevant for you as an individual? Did you walk away with any new insights, ideas, or project plans?*

1. {no response}
2. The specific experiences that each person brought to the table, including NN.
3. I liked talking about leadership styles and how to engage in planning.
4. I enjoyed learning about fundraising and leadership values/styles. I plan to implement

the concepts and conduct programmatic assessment of our initiatives when I return to work.

5. The sections on fundraising and donation offers. I feel better prepared as I return to my institution.
6. I think the case study and group work were of most importance. I am walking away from this course with greater confidence in my ability to advocate for myself and what I believe is important.
7. The RBMS competency matrix that we filled out over the course of the week gave me a roadmap for thinking about, framing, and naming my own skills and areas for development. This will help me grow as an individual and articulate my skills and the value of my unit.
8. Most topics are timely and useful. I've developed a competency plan that I plan to use to guide my next stage of career.
9. I learned a lot from the network of people I sat in class with.
10. The ability to listen and have space to hear about other students' experiences is beneficial. I walked away with some ideas for current and future projects.
11. Fundraising, strategic planning and priority settings were top of mind when I entered the course and I am walking away with a lot of practical tools and pathways for implementation at my current institution. I especially appreciated the storytelling exercise and how that can be applied in several different leadership areas (advocacy, donor relations, fundraising).
12. The entire course was relevant to me as an individual and in my current position and into the future. I am not one to speak up in class a lot, but I was compelled to speak up since I had some relevant experience to contribute to the conversation. Yes, I plan to include what I have learned in the class when I get back to work such as SWOT analysis, focusing on what is our core mission, practicing some of the activities with not only the special collections and archives staff but discuss some of what was taught with the University Library Dean, John Unsworth.
13. I was drawn to the topics of storytelling, fundraising, strategic planning, and the strength of BIPOC leadership in libraries. I'm excited to help facilitate storytelling sessions within my own team and I have a stronger understanding of budgeting for special collections. I've already shared some fundraising tips for the board I serve on and I am inspired by the direction our BIPOC leaders are taking the field.

4) *Did the instructors help you to acquire all the skills and information promised in the course description? Did you learn what you had hoped to learn?*

1. Yes, NN did a great job.
2. I learned so much more than I expected, and I even found the course healing. Thank you to NN and to my cohort.
3. Yes, though I wish there were BIPOC speakers invited, and that there was structured

acknowledgment of intersectional identities.

4. Yes, NN was an excellent instructor and I learned so much from her, as well as my classmates.
5. Yes, and yes.
6. I wanted perspective and I received a lot of that. No time was wasted. I am coming away from this course more knowledgeable.
7. Yes, and more!
8. Yes.
9. Yes, I think the class could have been longer! Everyday was so full of information that will serve me for the rest of my career.
10. Yes, the instructor prepared and executed a great class.
11. Yes (see Q3).
12. I learned more than I hoped for and had a great experience sharing ideas and reflecting on my own thoughts. I had a great experience and plan on taking on more leadership courses and workshops in the future.
13. Yes, I found the course description accurate and my needs were definitely met! It was more powerful and tangible than expected.

5) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*

1. I plan to refer to them in all aspects of librarianship.
2. I am looking forward to designing and implementing strategic planning. I will use the sticky story formula to a poster I have to design to promote my collection.
3. I hope to become a better strategic planner. I hope to help my team think about their place in their library careers and to encourage them to build upon their leadership skills.
4. I will use the skills I learned to develop a strategic plan for my unit and assess my working relationships with my team.
5. I will be undertaking a strategic planning process with my staff. I also plan to reach out to my institution's fund developer to develop a better working relationship.
6. I hope that I can use the skills and confidence obtained to advocate for what I know is important to my collections.
7. I have the skills and knowledge to set and document clear priorities for my department. I will use this in all that I do, and most immediately in drafting a collection development policy for my department based on clear mission and guiding principles.
8. {no response}
9. In my professional organization and at work.
10. I plan to use the skills to help support my current and future projects. I also hope to use these skills to advance in my career.
11. {no response}
12. I plan on implementing the skills and knowledge I learned both in my own department

and bringing this up to Library Administration.

13. {no response}

6) *Who might benefit the most from taking this RBS course?*

1. Those newly in positions of leadership or those thinking about taking on upper management and leadership roles in the future.
2. This should be a mandatory course for the Mellon fellows for Diversity, Inclusion, and Cultural Heritage.
3. People who are managers, and people who are managed.
4. New managers in a special collections unit.
5. Special collections librarians and archivists currently in management positions or hoping to take on future leadership positions.
6. Anyone interested in management in a library setting. I think a lot of the material presented would be useful for anyone interested in pursuing a leadership position. This course offers guidance that extends beyond a library.
7. Individuals working with distinct collections at various levels of leadership, as long as they have an interest in growing in that field. This could be for folks thinking about making the jump to a professional library position or folks thinking about becoming an AUL. The lessons are valuable broadly.
8. People who are in leadership roles or aspire to take leadership roles.
9. I think anyone in a position of leadership whether formal or informal.
10. Other Mellon Fellows for Diversity, Inclusion, and Cultural Heritage would benefit from this course.
11. Honestly, everyone working in special collections settings would (and arguably should) benefit from a course like this. There is still a deep need for leadership training in the library/archival field.
12. LIS professionals that are interested in leadership positions.
13. I think this RBS course could be valuable to anyone working within libraries, archives and special collections. The skills taught can be applicable to many different library settings and fills the management gap that often exists in many M.L.I.S. programs and certification programs. Highly valuable indeed!

7) *If applicable, what were the most powerful, or otherwise noteworthy educational moments in the course? Were there any "aha!" moments you'd like to share?*

1. Conversations, experiences, and ideas of fellow classmates.
2. I think that the experiences that NN shared of her career as a special collections leader were "aha!" moments. Also, the experiences that the other students shared, especially those related to race and leadership.
3. Learning about the hedgehog principle.

4. When we fundraise for our collections, we're not asking people for money, we're asking donors to contribute to a cause that we're both passionate about. This makes the ask feel less intimidating.
5. The importance of having a well-developed "sticky story."
6. It was great to hear that responsibilities involved with leadership do not need to be enjoyed. Value may be present in the responsibilities and that can be the driving force behind their necessity. Joy need not be.
7. Sharing and listening with classmates was illuminating, affirming, and full of so many "aha!" moments. Being part of a community of like-minded individuals all from different organizations is energizing and the source of new ideas and new knowledge.
8. {no response}
9. {private response}
10. Look to the mission statement. You can say No!
11. {no response}
12. I had an overall great experience and I am looking forward to taking what I learned to my home institution. I am usually a person that is more quiet, but I was encouraged to speak up.
13. We NEED BIPOC leadership at the table, all races have reported more impactful, positive workplace experiences under BIPOC leadership. In terms of strategic planning, I found the Good to Great framework very helpful. Also the breakdown of what makes a "sticky memory" when advocating for your workplace was highly valuable.

8) *Are there any other ways in which the course could have been improved?*

1. I think RBS should create a short list of restaurants for the Friday faculty lunch that could accommodate a class size and have a sign up list at the very beginning so there are no issues with selecting and reserving a restaurant for later in the week.
2. I think I would have enjoyed the course much more in the new facilities. This "unhoused" situation was tough.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. Appreciated all the speakers the instructor brought in, but I would have loved to hear from a special collections leader of color. Most of our class were BIPOC and having this perspective would have been invaluable to us.
6. {private response}
7. Have RBS handle the lunch coordination! Finding a restaurant was hard for groups of this size! Consider having RBS get in touch ahead of time with restaurants about arrangements, so that classes can then select from a group of options. The lunch is great, but the stress of organizing in a new city for everyone does not add to class bonding.

8. More BIPOC leaders as guest speakers. Collect and group questions for guest speakers in advance.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. The conversation around women and visioning felt a little out of touch with current conversation around moving outside the gender binary. I think replacing this with discussion around queer and/or BIPOC leadership would be more timely. I think that approach could still intersect with gender and leadership.
12. I think maybe including BIPOC speakers would be great.
13. Maybe a deeper dive on BIPOC leadership and inviting more speakers from historically marginalized identities could have enriched the class since the instructor cannot speak directly about the lived experiences of navigating special collections leadership as a staff of color.

9) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? How likely are you to recommend this course to others? **On a 1–10 scale**, 1 would indicate that you disagree that you got your money's worth, 5 would indicate a neutral response, and 10 would indicate that you agree that you got your money's worth.*

1. 10
2. 10
3. 10
4. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 10
8. 10
9. 10
10. 10
11. 10
12. 10
13. 10

10) *If your course made any (virtual) field trips outside of the classroom or had guest speakers, do you feel that they enhance the course experience?*

1. {no response}
2. Definitely, especially the conversations with Brenda Gunn, the development officers, and the Dean of UVA Libraries, John Unsworth.
3. Yes. {private response}
4. The field trip to SC was excellent, as were the guest speakers. I particularly enjoyed

speaking with Brenda Gunn and speakers from RBS and UVA Development, as well as the Dean of UVA Libraries, John Unsworth.

5. Yes, we met with the staff at UVA's Small Special Collections Library. The tour was informative as we think about space / facility needs for special collections materials.
6. Yes, the trip to the Small library and all guest speakers provided value.
7. Yes. We did a Zoom call with a guest speaker that was directly relevant to the themes of the class, largely because the speaker had been prepped on the class focus and the instructor helped direct and productive conversation.
8. Hearing from guest speakers in different roles talk about a variety of practical issues is educational.
9. Yes, I think it was helpful to hear from all of the speakers, I wish they had been more diverse.
10. {no response}
11. Yes, particularly the development staff. {private response}
12. {no response}
13. Yes! I loved talking to the RBS/UVA development staff, it was incredibly helpful. Just having open time to ask questions allowed the entire class to get feedback specific to their institutional needs.

11) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*

1. {no response}
2. Take it and DO THE READINGS FOR DAY 1.
3. {no response}
4. This course was incredibly worth-while and I learned applicable skills that I will bring back to my institution.
5. Bring your laptop and bring water. Sit in a new seat every day to get to know your classmates.
6. NN was a true joy to work and learn with!
7. Take this class! You will get more out of it than you can imagine.
8. Forming a group community is very important and rewarding. I hope this course will always be offered in person instead of online.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. {no response}
12. {no response}
13. Last summer at RBS in Princeton we had a "peer exchange" on a Thursday evening where students had the opportunity to look at some of the collection materials other courses were working with. It was really fun, and would offer that as something to consider for UVA. Since the Leadership Seminar does not work directly with materials,

I especially missed the opportunity to engage with some of the rare materials UVA is known for.

12) *If you had to sum up your RBS experience with a single sentence, phrase, or a haiku, what would you say?*

1. {no response}
2. I am excited about being a leader in special collections. I feel I have the tools and the personality, and I did not feel this way before.
3. Hot, hot, hot. Too hot hot hot hot. I am a puddle now. Help me, please.
4. I left class with a sense of community, knowing that we held space for each other and developed solutions for collective management issues.
5. Worth every penny!
6. Camaraderie can be created when it is sought from all places.
7. {no response}
8. Rich and rewarding.
9. {no response}
10. Great learning experience.
11. {no response}
12. {no response}
13. An opportunity to be energized and regain a little hope for the library profession.