

Executive Director's report

By Annette DeFaveri.

Positive feedback

I don't want to speak too soon, but it seems that the 2013 BC Libraries Conference was a success. People I talked to at the conference were enjoying it.

Feedback in the days after the conference was positive and congratulatory. Comments that came secondhand were encouraging and sometimes surprising. Some of my favorites include:

"I don't usually attend traditional conferences, but I enjoyed this one."

"This was the best BCLA Conference I've been to so far and the changes you made were noticeable. I wasn't even going to attend the conference this year but then ended up going at the last minute and I'm glad I did."

Plan for interactive sessions

One of the changes we made this year was adding 45 minute sessions. Overall this approach was applauded and encouraged and people said they enjoyed the format. There is also very good and constructive feedback around the sessions that I hope we can act on next year. Some great suggestions for change come from comments such as these:

"I enjoyed the 45 minute format but was hoping for a more interactive approach; most of what I attended still looked like the "presenter at the front of the room," but for a shorter amount of time. It would be interesting to have 45 minute sessions that provide more opportunity for discussion and debate."

"I loved the shorter sessions and heard lots of positive comments about interactive sessions – I wonder if there is a way to encourage more interactive session so there is a better balance with sit and listen sessions?"

One way that we can encourage and provide more interactive sessions next year is to specifically ask for interactive session proposals for the 2014 conference. I hope those of you interested in participating in next year's conference will begin to plan and develop conference sessions that are interactive and support delegate participation. I know from my own

experience that presenters can sometimes believe that delivering a fully scripted session is safer and more manageable than interactive and loosely composed sessions. And maybe this is true, but a fully scripted approach can miss the moments of creativity, collaboration and shared learning that less formal, interactive sessions encourage. We learn, engage and discover in different ways so I would echo the comment that suggests we strive for balance in our session formats and styles.

Meeting members

Another comment that resonated with me came via the conference feedback form:

"As a new member to BCLA I would have liked more of a welcome to the conference and an opportunity to meet other new members."

Yes! This is a great idea and one we should have thought of ourselves. I have attended the Ontario Library Association Conference several times in the past and recall that they have something like a "Newcomers Breakfast" or "Newcomers Afternoon Break" at their event. I'll take this idea forward to the 2014 Conference Planning Committee.

Presenter suggestions

Another theme in the conference feedback, that we heard last year as well as this year, is the suggestion that BCLA add conference presenters from organizations or areas that intersect with libraries. For example, add a session on urban planning that focuses on population trends and city development as a way to understand community demographics and the implications for libraries. Delegates indicate that they are interested in what people are learning in other industries and organizations and in understanding what this learning may mean for libraries.

Improve & innovate

Overall the goal of the 2013 BC Library Conference was to provide meaningful and creative experiences for delegates that expand their view of the library environment and support their day-to-day work. Planning and delivering a conference is an amazing balancing act with multiple tensions, often conflicting

outcomes, and without an established path to follow. This is both the difficulty and the joy of conference planning. Every year there is an opportunity to improve and innovate. Every year the definition of what is relevant changes and every year there is another chance to provide a focused, collaborative and productive experience for all who attend.

Thank you for attending the 2013 BC Library Conference. Looking forward to seeing you next year!

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