The View from the (not so) Ivory Tower

by Linda Shackle, ASU Noble Science & Engineering Library



Arizona Library Association Annual Conference: A First-Timer's Perspective

The AzLA conference has a lot to offer academic librarians.

by Katherine Clemens, Guest Author, Arizona State University Libraries

Last month I had the privilege of attending my first Arizona Library Association annual conference. As a new librarian working in the Science Reference department at Arizona State University Libraries, I was eager to attend the conference. I welcomed the opportunity to learn what other libraries are doing and to network with other librarians. I had been told that the conference was not well attended by aca-

demic librarians, due to the lack of programming in that area. Clearly, that was not the case this year. When I started planning which conference programs to attend months in advance, I found myself making tough decisions about which ones to sacrifice so that I could attend the others. I was delighted with how much the conference had to offer academic librarians.

The majority of the conference programs I attended were for the College and University Division, although a few were for the Reference, Public Services and Instruction Special Interest Group. There were also several programs in the Public Libraries and Teacher-Librarian Divisions that interested me. I tried to select the programs that would provide me with information that would be relevant and useful for my current position. Each of the programs I attended offered me an idea or some information that I could really use in my job. For those programs that I wanted to attend, but could not due to scheduling conflicts, I was able to get an overview from a friend who attended.

In addition to attending the conference programs, I really enjoyed the other features of the conference, such as the exhibits and poster sessions. Although I would have liked to attend the preconference sessions and the meals, they were a bit of a financial stretch for a new librarian. However, this was not necessarily a bad thing, as my meals turned out to be opportunities to socialize with old and new friends. I must say that one of the best things about the conference was meeting so many great people who are doing great things in their libraries.

As I reflect on my first AzLA conference, I am really glad that I was able to attend. I learned quite a bit that will help me in my job; and I came away with new ideas and different perspectives on academic library issues. I also met or reconnected with people I can possibly collaborate with on future projects.

I thought the programming for academic librarians was very appropriate, and I commend the College and University Libraries Division for working to ensure that appropriate programs were available. I am already looking forward to attending next year's conference in Mesa and am tossing around ideas for a conference program or poster.

In closing, I hope that all academic librarians, especially those who are new to the profession, will consider attending the AzLA conference in the future. It offers a chance to meet people who share a passion for libraries, and it presents plentiful opportunities to learn and contribute.