

2018

Clark Library Ethics Project: Advocacy for Roles and Values

Heidi Senior

University of Portland, senior@up.edu

Jane Scott

University of Portland, scottj@up.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://pilot scholars.up.edu/lib_facpubs



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Citation: Pilot Scholars Version (Modified MLA Style)

Senior, Heidi and Scott, Jane, "Clark Library Ethics Project: Advocacy for Roles and Values" (2018). *Library Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 9.

https://pilot scholars.up.edu/lib_facpubs/9

This Conference Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Clark Library/Archives at Pilot Scholars. It has been accepted for inclusion in Library Faculty Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of Pilot Scholars. For more information, please contact library@up.edu.

Clark Library Ethics Project: Advocacy for Roles and Values

Heidi E. K. Senior, Jane Scott
Clark Library, University of Portland

Background

The University of Portland is a comprehensive, private, Catholic university with a major focus on undergraduate education. Located in north Portland, it enrolls 4,400 students, the majority of whom are undergraduates. It has a strong College of Arts and Sciences as well as Schools of Business, Education, Engineering, and Nursing.

The University's stated goal of moral formation is evident within the core curriculum's required units of philosophy where discussions about value systems and moral reasoning occur. Within the professional schools, instruction in applied ethics is evident through direct instruction, discussion, and readings.

At the University, this goal is supported by the Dundon-Berchtold Institute housed on the University campus. The Institute offers classes, public events, and has funded student-faculty research in ethics since 2013. Prior to the current project, no faculty outside of the College and Schools had participated.

Advocating for Values

Library values were strengthened by **library-wide activities**, including directed activities within small groups, individually assigned readings and responses, and discussions at all-staff meetings.

Participants felt empowered to enter into campus discussions around ethical issues in which the Library and its professional values have a perspective.

The **Statement of Ethics** (<https://library.up.edu/ethics>) makes visible the library's commitment to its community to uphold ethical values in daily work.

The **Ethics of Information syllabi statement** (<https://library.up.edu/ethics>) exhorts students to view the information cycle holistically through an ethical lens and to widen their perception of information ethics beyond plagiarism. The Provost has required this statement to be included in all faculty syllabi.

Advocating for the Role of the Library

Because ethics is a pillar of the University of Portland core curriculum, it is an important issue on campus, and we believe it is vital for Clark Library to take part in conversations around key issues.

By participating in the Dundon-Berchtold Institute's student-faculty ethics research initiative, we demonstrated that we could take a leadership role within the conversation around ethics, rather than our more typical support role.

To participate effectively in the initiative, the library adapted initiative goals to fit the library's mission. Where typical projects involve primary research, the research component of Clark Library's project was secondary and subsidiary to the main goal of staff development and producing statements of ethics.

Adapting the project in this way, the library asserted its ability to contribute creatively to campus initiatives, and developed a new model for participation by future contributors.

Overview of the Project

The Library received a Dundon-Berchtold Grant to "examine ethical issues in librarianship as they are practiced and understood at our institution and then develop a statement of ethics for our work going forward as well as an ethical use of information statement that can be promoted and included on syllabi" (Grant Proposal, 2017).

Part one: Two faculty librarians and two student researchers reviewed the library literature regarding ethical practices and created an annotated bibliography by functional area.

Part two: Library-wide focus on ethical practices within regular meeting times through a number of **guided activities**: **reading** the ALA and IFLA codes of ethics and **commenting** on how our current practices reflect these values; small group **discussions** focused on the ethics and policy concerns within library dilemmas; **reading** functional area annotations and **writing** ethical values to be considered for the Library Statement of Ethics.

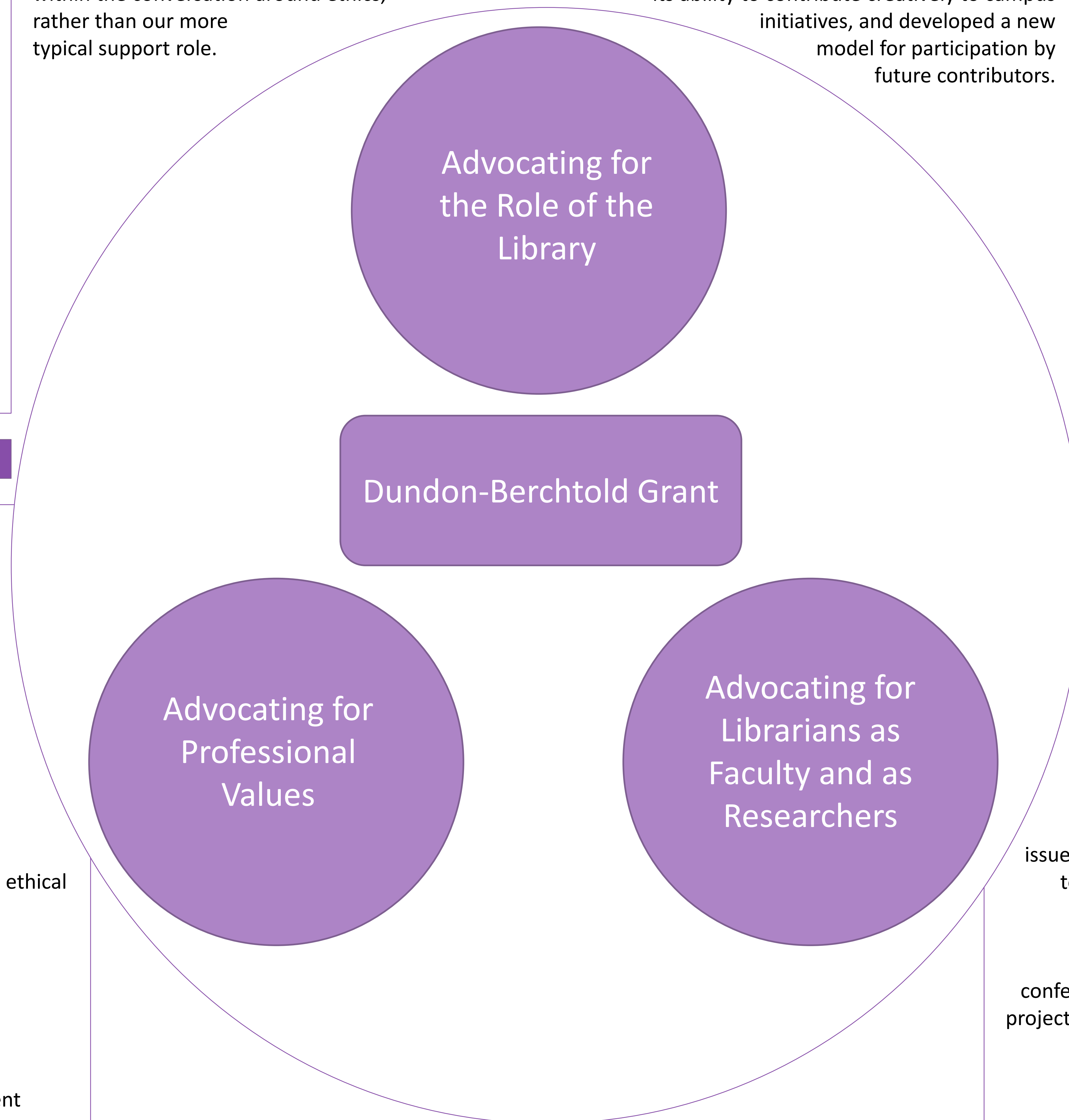
Advocating for Librarians

Librarians served as mentors to undergraduate researchers, setting the research agenda within the discipline of librarianship and instructing the researchers in the process of professional research and publishing.

We participated in colloquia led by philosophy professors, taking a seat at the table with faculty from the College and Schools.

When a philosophy professor consulted with the research team, he was skeptical that ethical issues existed within librarianship, and we helped him to understand the nature of our ethical issues and to see that we do encounter ethical dilemmas.

Librarians published journal articles and gave conference presentations about various aspects of the project, demonstrating to campus that we participate in disciplinary conversations.



Applying our story in your institution:

- Look for opportunities within your institution where the library's voice could advocate for library roles or values.
- Identify opportunities within your library for staff development and training that could support professional values.
- Be proactive and make suggestions about alterations to institutional opportunities.

For more information:

Senior, H., & Scott, J. (in press). An academic library's self-study in ethics: A library-wide investigation of ethical practice. *Journal of Library Administration*. doi: 10.2080/01930826.2018.1516952

ORCID: Heidi Senior <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5139-3092>

Jane Scott <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5143-7278>