

President's Update - June 9, 2016

I've been thinking a lot about gratitude lately. Last week I had the opportunity to attend the Academic Library Development Network (ALADN) conference in Boston. The speakers repeatedly emphasized the need to say thank you and to say it often.

We were reminded of Penelope Burk's research, which shows that donors who are thanked by phone within 48 hours are more likely to be repeat donors and more likely to increase their donations. Donors appreciate prompt contact that expresses gratitude and explains the impact of the donor's investment.

Lynne Wester, known for her Donor Relations Guru blog, encouraged us to analyze our communications to determine our ratio of gratitude to ask. Supporters, she said, will respond more generously if most of our communications are sincere expressions of gratitude and stories about impact. While many fundraising professionals claim that we need to ask more often to receive more often, donors disagree. They do not want to be constantly solicited and they don't want every thank you letter to include the next ask. I encourage you to review the resources and presentations on Ms. Wester's website, <http://www.donorrelationsguru.com>.

In the spirit of gratitude, I want to thank the Library of Michigan for its Library Continuing Education Program, which provides continuing education stipends to public, academic and school library staff. This month three people from my library benefited from the LoM's generous program. It supported my participation at ALADN and it is supporting two staff members who are currently attending the Great Lakes Resource Sharing Conference. I encourage all library staff to take advantage of the program.

I also want to thank Northern Michigan University and my colleagues at Lydia M. Olson Library for their commitment to professional engagement. I could not volunteer on the MLA board, serve as an officer, or travel to Lansing from the Upper Peninsula without their support.

It's hard to believe that this is my last month as president of the Michigan Library Association. I appreciate that I have had the opportunity to lead an amazing board of directors. I also appreciate being able to represent all of our members, who constantly contribute to our organization's success. MLA accomplished great things, including the eventual defeat of SB

571, because of you. Thank you for all that you do to support libraries, library professionals and our communities.

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