

Managing Conflict in Academic Libraries

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Abstract

Conflict is not a new word in management, sociology, political science and psychology. This paper argues that apparently there is to be silence on the part of librarians on this issue. It remark that conflicts are essential because if they caused, stagnation would set in. Therefore conflict should not be suppressed. It also argues that the ability to manage conflicts and disagreement is one of the most vital skills of leadership. Leadership must be seen in relation to a service, and a library manager must be chosen primarily for his/her demonstrated managerial competence and leadership. An alternative model of Library management derived from the academic department model of shared governance is being proposed. It emphasizes shared leadership responsibilities and decision making, and a relatively non-hierarchical management structure which places emphasis on process and communication rather than authority and structure. The paper finally emphasizes that conflict management should not be taken for granted. It has to be part of formal training in librarianship/information profession. This is because conflicts have implication for all parts of the academy: staff, faculty, academic administrators and Library staff themselves who are supposed to be larders in the adoption of new information technology in teaching and learning. But requires new thinking.

Keywords:

Management; Conflicts; Academic Library