

Arlene Haessler
2017 MLIS Student FLA Scholarship Recipient
University of South Florida

First, I would like to thank the Suncoast Information Specialists for awarding me with the scholarship to attend the FLA Annual Conference this year. As an online student in a rural area with an interest in academic and medical librarianship I have few opportunities to interact with LIS professionals working in those areas, nor with my fellow students, professors and future colleagues. Last summer I was able to attend two conferences, the Science Boot Camp for Librarians Southeast and the SAA in Atlanta. I also attended the small but mighty Florida Health Sciences Library Association meeting in March but I did not make it to the FLA Annual Conference last year and I did not think I would be able to afford it this year. Then I was awarded the SIS scholarship and asked to volunteer for our department with some reimbursement and with this assistance was able to attend!

I spent many hours looking through the schedule and trying to decide how I could be in two places at once (sometimes more). I settled on a few primary interests and decided to play it by ear the rest of the time. Wednesday morning began with the new attendee orientation and then the keynote speaker, Toni Tipton-Martin. The story of her work was fascinating and an inspiration. My next stop was the section, *So You Want to be a Faculty Librarian?* This was such a useful presentation, the presenters described the process for hiring in their university libraries, but also were able to generalize it a bit so that I left with a deeper understanding of the expectations if I were ever to land that coveted academic library interview.

I was interested in a couple of committees and saw a familiar name from the Science Boot Camp on the Leadership Development Committee. One of the nicest qualities of the FLA is how small it is, I was able to track Renaine Julian from FSU down easily. After speaking with him about the committee, I decided to attend the Library Leadership Roundtable that afternoon and the LDC's meeting the next morning. While I am far from a leadership role in LIS, I am currently trying to manage the Keys Chapter of the Florida State Massage Therapy Association (FSMTA) to get them prepared for when I move on. We have struggled for years with bringing in new members as well as having them take on leadership roles (I think this is a familiar problem with any volunteer run association). With the LDC I was hoping I would both gain some inspiration for inspiring leadership in my current colleagues as well as build transferable skills and I was not disappointed. Wednesday evening my fellow USF students and I assisted with the USF Alumni Reception. This was a great opportunity to network with fellow students and graduates as well as professors from the department, since I rarely see any of them in person.

Other sections I attended were, Creative Solutions in Technical Services and the FALSC Forum. I am interested in learning more about Florida colleges and universities move to the Sierra ILS so the forum was interesting. The President's Reception was a lot of fun! It was also another excellent networking opportunity. Myself and a fellow USF student had a long discussion with a USF Alum about the program and requirements as well as what her experience is at a college library.

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Although the FLA was not as large and glamorous as the SAA or as focused as the Science Boot Camp or the FHSLA, I found it inspiring and encouraging. One of the main takeaways for me was the idea that even as a student, or an early career professional I could have something to say and do a presentation of my own at a conference like this. I left with several ideas for projects and hope to begin working on them soon! Thank you so much for helping me to attend this conference!