

In the Middle of Difficulty Lies Opportunity

Hope Floats

Evviva Weinraub Lajoie

If quarantine has illustrated anything to me, it's that time is merely a construct. While my approximately 2-month term as President may be the shortest in LITA history, it has been filled with meetings, reports, protests, and preparations for our metamorphosis into Core. My thoughts have been consumed with the myriad of financial, health, and societal issues that have also filled my news feed. I spend a lot of time thinking and worrying about what their impact will be on our work and our institutions, how it impacts me and the people I work with personally, and what role Core may play for many of us in the future.

I imagine all of us are thinking about health and safety. We are all balancing those parts of ourselves that want to aid, to help, to teach and guide with the parts of ourselves that are anxious and scared. Many of us have responsibilities where we need to protect our loved ones and ourselves. We are seeing the health and safety of our BIPOC colleagues disproportionately harmed. Balancing our crucial role within our communities is complicated and there are no right answers.

I imagine many of us have been spending a lot of time thinking about money, whether it be personal concerns, institutional and organizational concerns, or their intersection point. We're thinking a lot more about where our money comes from, how it is invested, how we pay for things, how we prioritize paying for things, who decides what gets purchased, and whose voice gets centered when we make that purchase. We're thinking carefully about the institutions and infrastructures that have existed and how they will look different and should be different in a post-COVID landscape.

I imagine most of us are thinking about societal connections. We are interacting with our professional colleagues differently, and many of us are, perhaps for the first time, perceiving the deep imbalances that permeate our personal, social, and professional lives. We are all trying to figure out how to do the work we need to do when we are uncomfortable and the world is uncertain and the demands for change are coming from all angles and in a variety of forms.

LITA remained my professional home through the years because I found it to be a place where no matter who you were or where you worked, there was a place for you. That feeling of connection is so vital to all of us, pandemic and social unrest or not. Knowing there is a network I can depend on to be there when I'm working through the difficult and uncomfortable makes the work just a little bit easier and significantly more meaningful. Our professional organizations and affiliations have the ability to be an anchor in uncertain times - whether through a change in career, a financial crisis, an environmental catastrophe, or a global health emergency.

On August 31, 2020, LITA officially dissolved and on September 1, our home became Core. At our last LITA Board meeting, Margaret Heller and Amanda L. Goodman presented [a history of LITA](#).

Evviva Weinraub Lajoie (evviva@gmail.com) is Vice Provost for University Libraries and University Librarian, University at Buffalo, and the last LITA President. © 2020.

What became clear to me in the retelling is that this is not LITA's first reorganization. Nor is it our second or our third. LLAMA, LITA, and ALCTS have always been dancing with each other. Our merger is an acknowledgement that we "[...play a central role in every library, shaping the future of the profession by striking a balance between maintenance and innovation, process and progress, collaboration and leading.](#)"

Collectively, we have had a year that is beyond comprehension—it has been filled with loss, anger, frustration, grief, anxiety, depression, horror...we have all been weathering the same storm, but our ships are not all equally prepared for the task laid ahead of them. That has been, for so many of us, the hardest part of all of this. We may have always known that inequities existed, that the system was structured to make sure that some folks were never able to get access to the better goods and services, but for many, this pandemic is the first time we have had those systemic inequities held up to our noses and been asked, "what are **you** going to do to change this?" Balancing those priorities will require us to lean on our professional networks and organizations to be more and to do more. I believe that together, we can make Core stand up to that challenge.

It has been an honor to serve as the last LITA President. For the brief time I have served, to have the chance to hold an office so many people I truly admire have held...it is a legacy I am proud to have had a moment to uphold. I am gratified to transition LITA into a partnership that will take all that we have loved about LITA and make something new, something Core.