What book would you recommend or wish you had read before taking on a leadership role?

1. USING SERVANT LEADERSHIP: HOW TO REFRAKE THE CORE FUNCTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION by Angelo J. Letizia (Rutgers University Press, 2017). “To effectively lead and support the team of experts needed in law libraries today, leaders should consider a servant leadership style. Traditional leadership generally involves the exercise of power by one at the top of the pyramid. By comparison, the servant-leader shares power and helps people flourish, resulting in a high level of performance. The author of the book, Angelo J. Letizia, suggests that administrators use their positions not to accumulate power but to exemplify wise and selfless leadership. When leaders serve, they unlock purpose and ingenuity in those around them, resulting in an engaged, fulfilled team working toward a common mission.”

Jamie J. Baker; Associate Dean & Director of the Law Library, Professor of Law, Texas Tech University School of Law; Lubbock, TX

2. JUST CAUSE: THE SEVEN TESTS, THIRD EDITION by Adolph M. Koven and Susan L. Smith. [BNB Books, October 1, 2016]. “Dealing with employee discipline is an unfortunate reality of organizational leadership. Just Cause provides an excellent framework for leaders for ensuring that disciplinary action is sustained in arbitration. Just Cause is more widely useful than that, however. It lays out a clear set of procedures for ensuring that disciplinary actions are fair to the employees and consistent across the organization. Most valuable for a new leader is the multitude of examples that help to show both when taking disciplinary action is appropriate and how severe that action should be.”

David Sanborne; Deputy Law Librarian; Cook County Law Library; Chicago, IL

3. LEAD FROM THE OUTSIDE: HOW TO BUILD YOUR FUTURE AND MAKE REAL CHANGE by Stacey Abrams (Picador, March 26, 2019). “This is a book I can strongly recommend. I tend not to be a fan of many ‘traditional’ leadership texts that are so often recommended because, although I can appreciate the value of the ideas being shared, those texts, to me, lack relatability. Abrams’s book is a relief in that respect because it addresses so many issues that might prevent those of us who were not born into opportunity from even trying to take on a leadership role. Abrams directly addresses internal and external barriers to leadership and, most importantly, the role that ‘otherness’ and fear can play in shaping a potential leader’s successes and failures. Her candid perspective on leadership is worth reading.”

Clanitra Stewart Nejdl; Research Services Librarian and Lecturer in Law; Alyne Queener Massey Law Library; Vanderbilt University; Nashville, TN

4. THE COLLABORATIVE IMPERATIVE: LIBRARIANS AND FACULTY WORKING TOGETHER IN THE INFORMATION UNIVERSE by Dick Raspa and Dane Ward [American Library Association, ACLR 2000]. “In 2000, while working as a reference librarian at Northern Kentucky University, I read The Collaborative Imperative. It guided me then, as a young law librarian, and it guides me today. In order to stay relevant, the authors maintained that librarians must first network, then coordinate, and ultimately collaborate with faculty—collaborating being when a librarian and faculty member work together as a team in pursuit of a common goal. I firmly believe that the academic law library will thrive if its librarians collaborate regularly with faculty. I make this my primary goal and the goal of my librarians. If this occurs, stakeholders will not question the library’s worth and faculty will be the law library’s strongest advocate.”

Eric Young; Assistant Dean & Law Library Director; University of South Dakota; McKusick Law Library; Vermillion, SD