**But I’m a Librarian! Organizing an Academic Conference on Your Campus**

Zara Wilkinson and Julie Still of Rutgers University-Camden in Camden, NJ, presented on their experiences organizing an academic conference in May 2014. Their conference, Buffy to Batgirl: Women and Gender in Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Comics, was held on the Rutgers-Camden campus over two days in May 2014. Buffy to Batgirl had over 150 attendees, who came mostly from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, but also from numerous other states, Canada, England, and Germany. The conference has also led to other professional opportunities, such as conference presentations and a co-edited book to be published in the near future. They expressed the hope that their experiences can be helpful to other academic librarians who may finding themselves organizing an academic conferences or other large events (such as library conferences or professional development programs).

The presenters described the conference planning process from beginning (developing an idea) to end (what to do after the event). They began by detailing what to think about as you get started, such as picking a subject and defining parameters, outlining a conference budget, seeking both internal and external funding, and working out local arrangements (food, events, rooms, lodging for presenters). These factors are all interrelated, but they stressed that the conference budget was perhaps the most important document they prepared.

Wilkinson and Still then discussed the academic elements that make a conference like Buffy to Batgirl different than professional development events or professional conferences. The call for papers, for example, is one of the important elements of an academic conference, because the quality of conference papers is one of the main factors that determine the quality of the conference. They described writing and posting the call for Buffy to Batgirl, which received a lot of attention on social media platforms such as Tumblr. They also sent personalized emails to faculty in the New Jersey/Pennsylvania area that had taught courses in science fiction or had published on topics related to science fiction.

Once the call went out and they began receiving papers, they had to evaluate papers for quality and decide which to accept. The number of papers they accepted was determined by the number of concurrent panels and the number of papers assigned to each panel. By having three concurrent panels and four papers per panel, they were able to accept a large percentage of the paper proposals they received. They then had to group papers into panels and shape the rest of the conference, including all-conference events, around the scheduled panels.

Wilkinson and Still described the logistical issues that cropped on the actual day of the conference. The biggest issue they encountered was the registration table, which they staffed themselves. They recommended that event planners, especially conference planners, recruit people to work the registration table in the morning as well as throughout the event. This would allow the organizers to take care of other matters, such as answering questions, checking the presentation rooms, troubleshooting any technical issues, and generally monitoring the progress of each panel.

Lastly, they described what to do after a conference, including assessment in the form of a attendee survey and the collection of any social media or other media mentions. Buffy to Batgirl had an official hashtag (#buffytobatgirl) that was included on conference materials, so they were able to collect Tweets about the conference and demonstrate impact. These materials can also be used to inform any post-conference paperwork, such as a report to a granting agency or other stakeholders. Wilkinson and Still prepared a post-conference report for library and campus administrators and any office that made financial or in-kind donations to support the conference.