ABSTRACT
Starting with the 2010 Annual Meeting, ASIS&T established the New Leaders Award to recognize outstanding up-and-coming information scientists. The recipients for 2010 were Andrea Baer, Laura Christopherson, Alex Garnett, Margaret Gross, Thomas Heverin, Tina Jayroe, Sara Mooney and Denise Pasquinelli. Award recipients have been active in local ASIS&T chapter activities, and many were prompted by mentors to apply for the recognition. To further their leadership, they were expected to participate in a leadership activity supporting the Annual Meeting and to establish personal leadership goals for the future. These outstanding new leaders have taken on responsibilities for promoting and sustaining their SIGs, building chapters and recruiting members, developing webinars and workshops and building networking groups of information scientists with similar interests.

KEYWORDS
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The New Leaders Award, inaugurated with the 2010 Annual Meeting, was a huge success, thanks in large part to the efforts of Chapter Assembly Director Cassidy Sugimoto. Recipients of the award, which partially funds conference attendance for two years, met up with their assigned mentors and plunged into leadership activities in their selected SIGs, chapters and committees. Several months after the conference, the new leaders were asked to share their thoughts about the program, the conference and ASIS&T. Before hearing about their experiences, let’s find out a little bit more about this first group.

Andrea Baer (mentor: Sanda Erdelez) received her master’s degree in information sciences from the University of Tennessee a few months after the Annual Meeting. She also has a Ph.D. in comparative literature from the University of Washington. She hopes to pursue a career in academic librarianship, particularly in the areas of reference, instruction and outreach work. In addition to conducting a job search, Andrea is currently developing English curriculum and teaching for Ashford University and serving as a reference administrator for the Internet Public Library. Soon she will also begin work as a consultant for the University of Tennessee Center for Information and Communication Studies.

Laura Christopherson (mentor: Cassidy Sugimoto) started her education with a B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), majoring in drama. She stayed in the theater for a while, acting, directing and designing scenery at several venues, including work at Duke University theaters. Over the years she moved into designing websites and print materials and then into systems analysis, information architecture and project management for web development, working for places like UNC, Duke, Intrahrealth and Computer Sciences Corporation. During this time, she completed her master’s degree at UNC’s School of Information and Library Science, where she is now pursuing a Ph.D. Laura’s interests focus on how technology shapes our social, work, communication and information behaviors. She is interested in the ways people adapt and respond to technological change and how they do so in creative ways. She finds language, as evidence of these behaviors, particularly fascinating.

Candy Schwartz is professor and coordinator of doctoral studies in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts. She is a past president of ASIS&T and a recipient of many ASIS&T awards. She can be reached by email at candy.schwartz<at>simmons.edu.
Alex Garnett (mentor: Diane Neal) began his higher education with a B.A. in cognitive science from the University of Connecticut. He describes this degree as being “about the single best way I could have prepared for a future in LIS – spending three years feeling like he was exhaustingly jack-of-all-trades-master-of-none.” He is now based in Vancouver and has just received his master’s degree in library and information science from the University of British Columbia. Alex is currently with Neurethics Canada, following work with the Public Knowledge Project, the Human Early Learning Project and the British Library. He is focusing his interests on open publishing, policy and education. He describes himself as “an information guy who works with high concepts and terrific people.”

Margaret Gross (mentor: Steve MacCall) is the institutional assistant director/supervisor of the Learning Resource Centers for Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine. She holds an MLIS from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and also has graduate degrees in English and education from Duquesne University. She is currently revising a paper called “Sister, Sister: Rethinking Sense-Making Theory through Consciousness-Raising,” presented with Lindsay Currie at the recent Medical Library Association conference. She enjoys working with the medical students at Lake Erie College, and her unit recently completed its first outreach community service project. The second round of the project, “Access to E-Health Information and Basic Medical Concepts: A Service-Learning Partnership between Second Year Medical Students and a 7th grade YMCA After School Initiative,” is already in planning. The results will be presented at the American Association of Osteopathic Medicine conference in the spring.

Thomas Heverin (mentor: Howard Rosenbaum) is a Ph.D. student in information science at the College of Information Science and Technology (the iSchool) at Drexel University. His research focuses on crisis informatics (the use of information communication technologies during times of crisis) and ethical concerns surrounding distributed surveillance through the use of social media. He has authored works on the use by city police departments of Twitter for information sharing and on the use of Twitter by the public in response to violent crises. His current research focuses on the factors that lead city police departments to adopt and use social media for public communications. Thomas has a B.S. in meteorology from Penn State and a master’s degree in library and information science from Syracuse University. He also served several years as an officer in the U.S. Navy.

Tina Jayroe (mentor: Barrie Hayes) graduated with an MLIS from the University of Denver in June and has been busy submitting Ph.D. applications to library and information science programs. Her undergraduate degree is in mass communications from Emerson College in Boston. Tina has worked as a teacher, docent, archivist and programming manager at The Integer Group, the University of Denver, Denver Public Library and Malden Access Television. She is interested in information retrieval and metadata initiatives. Tina currently volunteers for five non-profit organizations: two libraries, a soup kitchen, the Special Libraries Association (on the Executive Board of the Rocky Mountain Chapter) and ASIS&T.

Sara Mooney (mentor: Candy Schwartz) has a B.A. in communications from Elizabethtown College, an A.S. in show production and touring from Full Sail University, and an M.L.I.S. from Florida State University. She currently works for Cirque du Soleil in their Resident Shows Division as a technical documentation coordinator, which involves organizing, updating, preparing and validating content from 10 shows (over
Denise Pasquinelli (mentor: Shelley Warwick) is a graduate student in information and library science at the Pratt Institute, focusing thus far on information architecture, usability experience and information/experience design. In the past she has worked for public libraries and museums, planning educational programs for children, adults and speakers of English as a second language. She has also worked as a volunteer to design and redesign library spaces for *Bitch* magazine lending library and the Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland, Oregon. She studied theater arts, art, and Spanish as an undergraduate at Linfield College. Denise graduates from Pratt next spring and would like to end up as an information architect or part of a design consultancy. She is excited by creating engaging and accessible information experiences and thinks these are done best through considerations of cognitive psychology and, most importantly, play.

When asked about their motivations for applying for the New Leaders Award, many said that they were urged by individuals (often faculty) to apply, and some had held office in local ASIS&T chapters or student chapters. Tina, for example, characterized herself as already being a “walking cheerleader for ASIS&T.” Several mentioned that they were motivated by the desire to contribute. Peggy put it this way: “I decided I wanted to use my energy, skills and education to become more involved as an active participant rather than a passive observer.” Many pointed out that ASIS&T covers their areas of interest in ways that other organizations do not, and that they wanted to meet like-minded people.

This was the first Annual Meeting for most of the new leaders; only Tina and Thomas had been to ASIS&T 2009. All were made to feel very welcome – Denise described being stopped for amiable conversation by many long-term members, and both she and Tina pointed out that the relatively small size of ASIS&T made it easier to network. Phrases like “stack of new contacts,” “brain overflowing with new ideas” and “much more than what I’d expected” appear in their reports. Thomas and Alex both specifically mentioned that the New Leaders Award provided an extra boost to help them meet many new members, researchers and established ASIS&T leaders.

Each new leader was asked to engage in a specific leadership activity at the Annual Meeting and to set goals for the coming year. Many participated in SIGs. Laura, for example, joined the board of SIG/ED as communications officer and will be managing the SIG/ED Facebook presence, listserv and the wiki (should the SIG decide to retain it). As part of this position, she will be investigating other tools, such as academia.edu, that may be better suited to helping SIG/ED members connect and share ideas. She also agreed to be a part of a group that will propose a “birds of a feather” experience for the next ASIS&T Annual Meeting, aiming to group doctoral students interested in a particular topic with a mentor.

Alex was elected to the position of SIG/VIS webmaster and will be overhauling the website and doing his part to plug it into as many social media outlets as possible. He is also helping to plan a move away from image retrieval toward information visualization and other non-textual media for next year’s SIG/VIS workshop.

Andrea was introduced by her mentor to members of SIG/USE, and she volunteered to become the SIG’s communications specialist, in which capacity she will help implement and maintain a new SIG/USE blog.

Tina’s efforts are going to SIG/DL, for which she will be developing a series of webinars, including developing a course and its content, recording and editing the sessions, identifying the appropriate platform to deliver the content and delivering the final product(s) via one or several of those platforms. This activity will put her video and audio editing skills to good use.

Thomas is working on behalf of SIG/SI. His goals include creating a Facebook page for the SIG and helping develop a social informatics workshop for the 2011 Annual Meeting. Both of these goals will allow him to contribute to SIG/SI, promote social informatics as a research area and see how a SIG plans for a conference.

In Peggy’s case the lucky SIG was

100,000 show documents) for an upcoming SharePoint migration. In the past Sara has been a volunteer in several libraries and a lighting technician supervisor at Walt Disney World.
SIG/HEALTH, of which she is now chair-elect and program chair. In this capacity she is brainstorming next year’s conference scholarships and awards, working on increasing membership and running a member needs assessment survey. In addition, Peggy joined the Leadership Committee and attended the first virtual meeting in mid-December.

Sara was the only new leader whose primary assignment was to a committee – specifically the Membership Committee. She will be involved with evaluating the current printable form and web form membership applications and making suggestions to improve them. She is looking forward to finding out the number of and reasons for lapsed memberships and attempting new methods of member retention. Incidentally, she also became involved with SIG/KM, setting up a Twitter account on the SIG’s behalf.

Denise is unique in contributing her energy to a chapter. She is helping to revive the Metro NY chapter, for which she is now the acting Chapter Assembly Representative. She will attend the first formal welcome back gathering planned for February and will also be working on a joint ASIS&T@Pratt/Metro NY symposium slated for May on the topic of social media ethics and privacy issues.

Not surprisingly, the new leaders threw themselves wholeheartedly into the entire ASIS&T experience. Laura was involved in her school’s recruitment activities. Denise and Alex made some terrific new friends though participation in the student design competition. Alex also enjoyed meeting far more “celebrities” than he thought he would. Peggy was very pleased to establish a personal connection with a major researcher in her field of interest. Thomas enjoyed attending the planned social events, as he had the chance to meet numerous fellow Ph.D. students and junior and senior faculty members, as well as deans of schools. Tina gave a presentation at SIG CON, which was for her a dream come true, as she enjoys combining the silly and the scholarly (she once dressed up as Noam Chomsky for a class presentation). Sara completed her MLIS fully via an online program, so she especially enjoyed placing faces to names at the alumni gathering, and she also appreciated the poster session for allowing her to explore new research and concepts by both reading and talking to the presenters one-on-one.

New leaders were asked how they kept their ASIS&T spark burning once the Annual Meeting was over and they had returned to normal life. Alex has established regular e-mail correspondence with a handful of junior faculty whom he met at the conference and whose interests closely parallel his own. Likewise, Sara and Denise have made a point of making contact with people they met, sharing ideas and research leads. Sara points out that keeping up with the various ASIS&T news channels helps and that she makes an effort to “keep the curiosity door cracked open at all times.” Thomas has kept in close touch with his mentor and finds that this contact helps keep the momentum going. Peggy’s and Tina’s committees and SIGs and Denise’s chapter have kept them busy since the Annual Meeting. Denise left ASIS&T 2010 with ideas she wanted to implement for the student and budding Metro NY chapters, and she reports that slowly but surely, those things are happening. Tina will be getting a booster ASIS&T shot by attending the IA summit in March, and Peggy is motivated by her goal to present a paper at next year’s Annual Meeting.

Finally, the new leaders were asked whether they would recommend the award to other new(ish) members. The answer was a resounding “yes.” Andrea described it as “a good opportunity to get more involved with the organization and to make more connections with other members.” Alex said “Absolutely! The funding is very generous, and it marks a wonderful vote of confidence to stick along with ASIS&T.” Peggy has already recommended it to a nonmember friend whose personality and intellectual interests are well aligned with ASIS&T members. Thomas highly recommends the program, saying “not only will you become involved with this great organization but you will be provided opportunities to meet so many people.” Tina feels that mentors were the key that made the difference to the success of the experience. There’s a little bit of tweaking to do, but given the success of this year’s program, the answer to “Shall we do it again?” has to be, in the words of Denise and Sara, “Definitely” and “Yes, yes, and YES!”