



Lisa Hussey

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

B.A., University of Miami

M.A., University of Arizona

Ph.D., University of Missouri

Teaching/Research Areas

Diversity and management; leadership; graying of profession; theory vs. practice; academic vs. profession

SIMMONS
Graduate School of Library
and Information Science

Lisa Hussey: Asking Hard Questions

Lisa Hussey welcomes dissent. She loves to be challenged by alternate viewpoints and hopes students leave her class thinking and questioning rather than assuming and accepting. She believes that society spends too much time avoiding conflict — especially in relation to diversity. “We need to understand the role that conflict plays in diversity,” she says. “Diversity is change, and change always brings some level of conflict and tension. Unless you deal with it, it’s going to create more problems than you are going to solve. We need to keep asking the hard questions, many of which come from administration. A good manager understands that there are different ways to view things.”

Hussey believes that it’s not just about reading articles on diversity, but also about investigating why the field isn’t more diverse.

“Why did the percentage of white librarians go up, while numbers of minority librarians remained the same or went down? Where does management — in theory and in practice — fit in? What responsibility does the profession have to attract others from a variety of backgrounds?”

Her management classes also discuss understanding the patrons we serve. Hussey leads discussions about how to make the library a place where all people can feel comfortable asking questions.

“Sometimes people who don’t ask questions don’t know what to ask, or they don’t know they have the opportunity to ask questions. The biggest assumption libraries make is that people know we are here and know what we do. They don’t. For many minority groups, the library is not part of their culture. They don’t know the library is there, or they don’t understand its role. What are we doing to make sure information about the library is out there?”