



Annie Miskewitch (English '00, MA Writing '03)
at the Harold Washington Library.

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As she rose through the ranks of the Chicago Public Library (CPL), Annie Miskewitch (English '00, MA Writing '03) made an important discovery about leadership: one size does not fit all.

“I’ve learned a lot by observing and critically thinking,” says Miskewitch, division chief for business, history, science and government documents at Harold Washington Public Library, CPL’s flagship location in the South Loop. “You have to be exposed to a lot to know how to adapt your style to get the best outcome from all. Leadership has a lot of different kinds of hats to it.”

With a staff of 65 and a customer base in the millions, Miskewitch credits the broad perspective she gained at DePaul with helping her guide her team, her patrons and the library’s collections.

“Empathy is crucial,” she says. “It’s incredibly important not only to be exposed to other people, but literally to try that other shoe on sometimes and have an idea of how someone else can possibly think or feel.”

Miskewitch worked at the library as a circulation clerk while she was earning her undergraduate degree. After graduation, she missed being in the collaborative environment in LAS so much that she earned a master’s degree in writing. Her rigorous LAS education prepared her to get an online degree in library science from the University of Illinois, enabling her to become a full librarian.

Miskewitch’s former boss recognized her potential, promoting her to manager of the branch and encouraging her to reach higher. “She always thought that I was a great problem solver and was really good at critical thinking,” she says. “She really saw leadership skills and qualities in me at a time when I was just being me.”

Miskewitch, who’s been a division chief for four years, says her liberal arts experiences make her an effective team leader. “I think the liberal arts at DePaul exposed me to the human condition and how people respond at different times, how we behave, how we interact. Those skills always come into play with whatever you’re doing,” she says.

They are also pivotal to keeping the library’s collection responsive to the changing interests of patrons. She draws on her broad knowledge base, careful listening, and attention to news and trends, not to mention her own love of reading.

“Right now, offering information literacy is crucial, especially talking to people about real news versus fake news,” she says. “People really need to make sure that they are getting the best information possible. That’s what we strive to do.”