M y 2015 was a hectic year of teaching, scholarly publications, conference presentations, service and faculty support, and library administrative projects. There did not seem to be time during or in between the projects to slide (shovel) the remnants of the previous project out the door, so the piles of papers, books, and whatever were all a little out of hand. So today I cleaned out my office, filled the recycling bin with paper, organized the few paper files I still maintain, and sent books to the Better World Books collection area.

Doing so gave me a couple of hours to reflect on my 2015 accomplishments, and yes, failures—the article that didn't get published, the class session that didn't go as well as planned, the project I believed in and still believe deeply in that didn't get off the ground, and so on. While pitching, organizing, and decluttering, I reflected on my career plan for 2016.

The Association’s rebranding has figured sharply in my career planning. I am sure I am not alone in having asked my professional self, over the last few months, “Who am I?” and “What do I want to be?” I knew that if I was to make an informed vote on the rebranding, I needed to think through and answer these questions for myself and my career. And for this very reason I appreciate that the rebranding project is prompting me to think deeply about these issues. The relatively mindless act of sorting files and filling the recycling bin created some good quiet time for wrapping up that self-conversation.

While holding my self-conversation during my office clean-up, I had benefit of all the outstanding career advice in this issue of AALL Spectrum. The relevant ideas and on-point advice in every article in this issue played through my mind. Ron Wheeler’s advice on the importance of developing and practicing “soft skills;” Susan Catterall’s suggestions on how to pick up needed skills when thrown into management; Alycia Sutor’s personal-professional branding advice; Karen Cates’s negotiation tips and strategies; and Marcia Reynold’s guidance on staying energized and fulfilled in a setting that at first glance seems stagnant for advancement all speak directly to taking control of managing and developing your career.

“Lifelong learning” is a term we toss about with great frequency when we talk about goals for our patrons. Yet it is a goal we sometimes forget when it comes to our own careers and development. If you haven't started your plan for 2016 and beyond, remember: it is your career, your responsibility. Take some time, update and clean up your resume using Bret Christensen’s helpful article, make a plan, and identify and think about filling in your professional gaps with programming offered by AALL and others. It is never too early or too late to get it together professionally. This issue of AALL Spectrum is a great starting point to help you take charge of your career. I hope you will find it as personally and professionally helpful as I did.

My office is decluttered, I’ve got a plan for 2016, so bring it on!

Catherine A. Lemmer
calemmer@iupui.edu