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Agnes K. Bradshaw

Virginia Commonwealth University, akbradshaw@vcu.edu

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Chapter 5

STRENGTHENING THE PIPELINE-TALENT MANAGEMENT FOR LIBRARIES: A HUMAN RESOURCES PERSPECTIVE

Agnes K. Bradshaw

Introduction

Within any profession, there is a need to have talent (skilled employees) currently working in the profession. In addition, there is also a need to have employees “in the pipeline;” those employees ready and able or in the process of developing and preparing for higher-level roles. A term that has been in use by the private sector for more than a decade is “talent management.” The term originated from a 1997 report from McKinsey & Company which reported on the management consulting firm’s study of more than 200 corporate executives. The term “talent management” is now used within the human resources profession when discussing the recruitment function. For purposes of this chapter, I will use the following definition of talent management: “Broadly defined as the implementation of an [sic] integrated strategies or systems designed to increase workplace productivity by developing improved processes for attracting, developing, retaining and utilizing people with the required skills and aptitude to meet current and future business needs.¹ If organizations outside librarianship are recognizing the need to compete for

1. Society for Human Resources Management Glossary, <http://www.shrm.org/Templates/Tools/Glossaries/HRTerms/Pages/t.aspx>.

the best talent, why isn't librarianship? This chapter will look at talent management practices for developing the people who will be needed by the profession to ensure that it is seen as desirable for those from all groups, not just those from one group. In addition, the next steps after recruitment include the development of those within the profession to assume managerial, executive, and leadership roles. We will look at the representation of people of color within the profession and assess how talent management strategies can be utilized to ensure that librarians of color are included as a part of the organizational need to recruit and retain the best people, while ensuring that all groups of the user population are represented in the professional ranks.

There are many segments of librarianship: school media, public, academic, and various types of what is considered to be special librarianship, such as art, legal, medical, and music. In addition, library professionals may also be academics, such as being an LIS (Library and Information Science) educator. This chapter will concentrate on librarianship outside of LIS educators, although the lack of diversity within LIS educators is also an area of note. However, the role of an LIS educator is different from that of a librarian. The primary work of LIS educators is academic; it is not that of a practitioner, although many will also have a master's degree in library and information science in addition to the doctoral degree. This chapter will also focus on libraries within the United States.

Talent Management - Why Do Libraries Need It?

Talent management is the process that an organization uses to attract, develop, and retain skilled and valuable employees. In many organizations, talent management is a prime responsibility of the human resources function. Human resources professionals work together with managers on talent management processes including: workforce planning, recruitment, succession planning, leadership development, career and professional development, and finally the rewards strategy (salaries and employee benefits.) Human resources professionals together with organizational leaders work to ensure that the organization has the talent

it needs to meet the current and future demands of those who utilize the products and services of the organization. There is no universal definition of talent management, nor is there a universally acknowledged way to conduct it. However, even in a poor economy, employers are competing for employee talent. There may be greater availability of those positions at lower levels within the organization, but even for lower level positions, there are often more people than jobs. There are generally more jobs at the lower ends of the organizational chart, but this means that while employers may have a large selection from which to choose, all those applying for positions will not have the desired skills the employer is seeking, or will otherwise prove not to be suitable for a specific opening. For higher-level positions, there are usually fewer openings, but there are also fewer people with the skills and experience for those positions.

Although the research around talent management by McKinsey & Company focused on the private sector, the conclusions drawn from the private, for-profit sector workforce can also be applied to librarianship. Libraries are organizations that provide a service to their constituencies just like for-profit corporations: they must provide the products and services that the user wants; they must be prepared to adapt to the changes in external environment that set the stage for changes in the way those services are being delivered; they must cultivate a new generation of users to utilize their services and in doing so, embrace new technologies that provide the products that the new users want and need. Libraries, just like for-profit organizations, do these things—except at no direct cost to the user, and the organization is not charged with making a profit. Libraries must have the talent necessary to not only do the work that needs to be done for its current customer base, but must also be prepared to forecast and plan appropriately to staff for the future. They must have staff who can not only perform the core work that a library does but staff who have the skills (or are willing to acquire and develop the skills) necessary to move the organization to where it needs to be in order to meet the challenges of the future. Fifty years ago, if you wanted to know what materials were in the library, you had to look

in the physical card catalog and you needed to be in the physical library. In less than fifty years, library catalogs are now online and accessible to anyone with an Internet connection and a computer. Users are obtaining information in a variety of sources, not just via printed documents. Electronic journal articles, e-books and e-readers, digital images, and streaming video—all methods of obtaining information that did not exist a few generations ago. Public libraries are valuable resources to many, from young children first learning to read, to recent immigrants longing for news in their native language, to those seeking employment and looking for guidance on how to apply for a job online, to those who want to check out the latest John Gresham thriller.

Academic libraries serve a different constituency—students needing to research a topic for an assignment, a faculty member needing to locate an obscure text for an article he or she is writing, a community member needing to interpret recent online census data. All of these needs must be met by those employees with a varied skill base, including instruction, information technology, classification and organization, and customer service, to name a few. K-12 librarians (often called school media specialists) provide instructional assistance to students throughout elementary and high school. School librarians are often the first teachers of information literacy to students, and school libraries are often where students first encounter formal researching skills. Special librarians have specialized knowledge and serve in a variety of arenas, including academia, government, and the private sector. Finding and retaining people for these roles are where the process of talent management plays a significant role.

The pipeline for talent would consist of those employees who have been identified as having leadership or management potential, and can eventually assume management or leadership roles within the organization. For purposes of this chapter we will consider pipeline development as the strategy for ensuring that an organization is developing the human capital for all levels within the organization. This could mean developing those who are new to the profession and preparing them to assume first level management roles, or developing those who are in management

roles and preparing them to assume leadership roles such as director or dean. It could also mean preparing for those employees who will eventually leave their entry level positions and planning to fill those positions when they become vacant. Finally, it could mean attracting those to the profession who have not considered librarianship to be a career choice.

Does Librarianship Need to Compete for Talent?

For several years, the American Library Association (ALA), the largest professional organization for librarians, has been sounding an alarm about the “graying of the profession,”² when huge numbers of librarians would reach retirement age and stop working. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics *Occupational Outlook Handbook* 2012 report, job growth for librarians was predicted at a 7% increase from 2012-2022. This growth was defined as “slower than average” for all occupations. In the “Job Outlook” section of the report “budget limitations especially in local and educational services may slow demand.”³ The report also predicts that fewer librarians will be needed as people become more proficient with using electronic resources and that libraries may concentrate on the hiring of library paraprofessionals to save costs. By contrast, the BLS report predicts a 12% growth increase (as fast as average) for the same period of time for library paraprofessionals.

As do many professional organizations, ALA maintains demographic information on its members. In 2006, ALA released a report, *Diversity Counts*, which was updated most recently in 2012. The study provided data on librarians in six library types: K-12, Academic, Public, Hospital, Legal, and Other. The study revealed data that should not be surprising to any librarian of color currently working in the profession, or who has worked in the profession in the past—that the profession is

2. Rachel Singer Gordon, “Get Over the ‘Graying’ Profession Hype,” *Library Journal*, 129 (January 15, 2004): 62.

3. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, 2014, <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/librarians.htm> (accessed July 15, 2015).

overwhelmingly comprised of white females who are over 45 years of age. The study also pointed out that although there are students in LIS programs who are under age 35, there is a failure to incorporate those students into the profession. The report looked at statistics from the 2000 United States Census and the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) that reports on national, state and individual library statistics. The study revealed that “the 110,000 credentialed librarians in public, school and academic librarians are predominately white, regardless of age group or gender.”⁴ ALA keeps statistics on its membership and while all librarians do not belong to ALA, the figures compiled on its membership coincide with the figures of the 2000 Census estimates: White, 89%; African American, 5%; Latino, 2%; Native American (including Alaskan), less than 1%; Asian Pacific Islander, 3%; Two or more racial groups, 1%. The study also showed that the greatest percentage of all librarians by age was in the range of 45-54, although for this reporting on age groups there was a substantial difference between the ALA demographic responses and the 2000 census estimates. The study also revealed the distribution of the type of credentialed librarians. Most of the minority librarians work in public libraries.

A report from the ALA Office of Research and Statistics “Planning for 2015: The Recent History and Future Supply of Librarians” was prepared in 2009. The focus of this report was “credentialed librarians” defined as “persons who report their occupation in the Census of American Community Survey as librarians, and also report having at least a masters degree.”⁵ As with any strategic plan, there is no way for the writers to see into the future. In 2009, it would have been impossible to predict the lingering economic woes in the United States, and see the budget cuts that would impact municipalities, higher education,

4. American Library Association, Office for Research and Statistics; Office for Diversity, *Diversity Counts*, revised January, 2007, 9, http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org/offices/files/content/diversity/diversitycounts/diversitycounts_rev0.pdf.

5. American Library Association, Office of Research and Statistics, *Planning for 2015: The Recent History and Future Supply of Librarians*, June 2009, 5.

and the private sector which would impact the creation of new jobs, job eliminations and the delayed retirements. According to Michael Kelley in the 2012 Annual Budget Survey published in *Library Journal*, “many public libraries are, at best, furiously treading water.”⁶ Those same economic woes would be responsible for layoffs, the elimination of permanent positions, and more employers relying on hiring part-time and/or contingent workers (in many instances, so they would not be required to pay for employee benefit costs) to fill positions in attempts to save money. In addition, public libraries, as well as school systems, are reliant on tax revenues for funding. Municipalities throughout the United States have suffered from decreasing tax revenues which has resulted in cutbacks to municipal services, including library services.

In spite of these predictions of slow job growth, enrollment in graduate Library and Information Science (LIS) programs continue to increase. According to the Association for Library Science Education (ALISE) we are seeing (and have seen over the past several years) LIS programs enrolling and graduating students to an employment picture that does not look bright. BLS is predicting a change of 11,000 jobs for a 20-year period. **Table 1** shows the numbers of students library related programs in 2011 and **Table 2** shows the demographics of the graduates from library programs in 2011. While program enrollment does not guarantee program completion, the numbers of graduate students enrolled does seem to exceed the number of available jobs.

With an abundance of talent seeking employment, why is talent management needed by libraries? Even if supply exceeds the demand for available jobs, employers must still focus on recruitment, selection, employee development, and succession planning. It is not easier to recruit talent in a competitive environment. Even with high numbers of people entering and completing MLS programs, one must be mindful that the majority of those graduates will be seeking (and probably only qualified for) entry level positions. Annual salary surveys published by *Library Journal* conclude that most of the jobs that open up annually are

6. Michael Kelley, “The New Normal,” *Library Journal* (January, 2012): 37.

Table 1. Student Enrollment in LIS Programs
 (Wallace, Danny P. ed., *Library and Information Science Educational Statistical Report 2012*, Association for Library and Information Science Education, p. 67).

Program	Status	Male		Female		Total Number	Percent FT/PT
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Bachelor's	Full-Time	1,369	67	673	33	2,042	78.3
	Part-Time	388	68.7	177	31.3	565	21.7
	Subtotal	1,757	37.4	850	32.6	2,607	
Master's - LIS (ALA Accredited)	Full-Time	1,615	22.80	5,474	77.20	7,089	
	Part-Time	2,207	19.10	9,361	80.90	11,568	38
	Subtotal	3,822	20.50	14,835	79.50	18,657	62
Master's-IS	Full-Time	240	32.9	489	67.1	729	59.8
	Part-Time	121	24.7	369	75.3	490	40.2
	Subtotal	361	29.6	858	70.4	1,219	
Master's - Other	Full-Time	407	50.4	401	49.6	808	59.4
	Part-Time	343	62.1	209	37.9	552	40.6
	Subtotal	750	55.1	610	44.9	1,360	
Post Master's	Full-Time	17	37.8	28	62.2	45	13.7
	Part-Time	77	27.2	206	72.8	283	86.3
	Subtotal	94	28.7	234	71.3	328	
Doctoral	Full-Time	257	43.0	340	57.0	597	58.1
	Part-Time	157	36.5	273	63.5	430	41.9
	Subtotal	414	40.3	613	59.7	1,027	
Other Undergraduate	Full-Time	131	49.8	132	50.2	263	16
	Part-Time	519	37.5	866	62.5	1,385	84
	Subtotal	650	39.4	998	60.6	1,648	
Other Graduate	Full-Time	10	41.7	14	58.3	24	8.6
	Part-Time	43	16.9	212	83.1	255	91.4
	Subtotal	53	19	226	81	279	
Total	Full-Time	4,046	34.9	7,551	65.1	11,597	42.8
	Part-Time	3,855	24.8	11,673	75.2	15,528	57.2
	Total	7,901	29.1	19,224	70.9	27,125	

Table 2. Degrees and Certificates Awarded by Gender, Ethnicity, and Race
 (Wallace, Danny P. ed., Library and Information Science Educational Statistical Report 2012, Association for Library and Information Science Education, p. 119).

Degree	Gender	Hispanic of Any Race	American or Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races	International	Race or Ethnicity Unknown	Total
Bachelor's	Male	28	2	69	51	0	277	8	8	16	459
	Female	30	2	23	22	0	95	3	2	17	633
	Subtotal	58	4	92	73	0	372	11	10	33	1758
Master's - LIS (ALA Accredited)	Male	78	6	66	54	1	1217	16	47	273	1758
	Female	244	40	269	278	13	4492	52	132	949	6469
	Subtotal	322	46	335	332	14	5709	68	179	1222	8277
Master's - IS	Male	3	2	36	21	1	89	0	39	20	211
	Female	5	0	20	13	1	34	1	30	12	116
	Total	8	2	56	34	2	123	1	69	32	327
Master's - Other	Male	3	0	13	3	0	37	0	35	36	127
	Female	4	1	3	4	1	53	0	33	75	174
	Total	7	1	16	7	1	90	0	68	111	301
Post-Master's	Male	4	0	1	0	0	25	1	0	9	40
	Female	4	0	0	4	0	53	2	1	28	92
	Total	8	0	1	0	0	78	3	1	37	132
Doctoral	Male	1	0	5	2	0	12	0	12	4	36
	Female	0	0	5	1	0	64	0	15	4	89
	Total	1	0	10	2	0	76	0	27	8	124
Total	Male	117	10	190	130	2	1657	25	141	358	2630
	Female	287	43	320	322	15	4791	58	213	1085	7134
	Total	404	53	510	452	17	6448	83	354	1443	9764

not entry-level positions. Statistics from BLS do not include the types and levels of positions they expect to become available in the forecast, only the numbers of positions. While jobs are expected to be available, as in any profession, we should assume there will be a variety of skillsets and specializations needed, as well as depth and breadth of experience. An effective talent management strategy ensures that an organization is prepared to fill positions when they become vacant, allows the organization to provide career development practices for those employees currently working in the organization to prepare to assume supervisory or leadership roles when possible, and develop succession plans for those in key leadership positions. As a way to prepare for the future, that strategy will also include planning to incorporate recent MLS grads into the workforce,

Demographic Information

The lack of diversity within librarianship was discussed earlier in the chapter. While there is greater ethnic and gender diversity within the profession among those working as library clerks than those working as credentialed librarians, the profession as a whole is mainly comprised of white females. Some would not see this as an issue of concern. As seen in our most recent United States Census data, the demographics of the United States are changing. The greatest population growth is coming from the Latino/Hispanic and Asian populations. “The U.S. population will be considerably older and more racially and ethnically diverse by 2060, according to projections released today by the U.S. Census Bureau. These projections of the nation’s population by age, sex, race and Hispanic origin, which cover the 2012-2060 period, are the first set of population projections based on the 2010 Census. “The next half century marks key points in continuing trends — the U.S. will become a plurality nation, where the non-Hispanic white population remains the largest single group, but no group is in the majority,” said Acting Director

Thomas L. Mesenbourg.”⁷ As the racial and ethnic makeup of the nation changes, there are those that would argue that initiatives to make the profession “more diverse and inclusive” are unnecessary and perhaps unwanted. Reasons for reluctance and opposition are varied, including opposition to government intrusion into hiring and promotional practices by way of equal opportunity legislation and/or affirmative action requirements put in place as a remedy for previous acts of discrimination; the increasing outcries of “reverse discrimination” from certain groups and even the reluctance of those in groups that may be granted treatment that they do not feel they want or need. There may also be a need to preserve the status quo of the current demographics of the profession by those currently in positions who feel they would suffer if opportunities for those in the majority shift. An effective talent management strategy ensures recruitment and promotional opportunities are open to a wide segment of the available population. To assume that the best and most qualified talent comes only from a single group is to limit the possibilities of the organization to succeed.

Focus on Minorities or Underrepresented Populations

It is important to provide some historical background on the concept of minority groups and their representation in the workforce as a whole to better understand the concern about what may be termed the lack of adequate minority representation within librarianship. Over the last 50 years, there have been several instances of legislation enacted against discrimination in various forms. Probably the most sweeping legislation regarding civil rights in the United States was the Civil Rights Act of 1964, specifically Title VII, which made it illegal to discriminate in

7. United States Census Bureau, “U.S. Census Bureau Projections Show a Slower Growing, Older, More Diverse Nation a Half Century from Now,” last modified December 12, 2012, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb12-243.html>.

human resources activities such as hiring, pay, employee benefits, and promotional opportunities. Title VII “bars discrimination in all HR activities, including hiring, training, promotion, pay, employee benefits, and other conditions of employment. Discrimination is prohibited on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (also referred to as gender), or national origin.”⁸ While there have been several amendments to the original Act, as well as various litigation regarding how the Act should be interpreted, laws prohibiting employment discrimination are still in effect. In addition to the federal requirement, many, if not all states and municipalities have similar laws against discrimination. Under Title VII, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was created to enforce the provisions of the Civil Rights Act. The EEOC has responsibility for ensuring that “covered employers comply with the intent of this Act.”⁹ Another development impacting civil rights and equal opportunity employment issues was the signing of Executive Order 11246, which created the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), which has the authority to ensure equal opportunity for federal procurement. Federal contractors or subcontractors with “contracts in excess of \$50,000 must develop affirmative action plans.”¹⁰

There is often confusion between affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. “Affirmative action – policy that goes beyond equal employment opportunity by requiring organizations to comply with the law and correct past discrimination practices by increasing the numbers minorities and women in specific positions.”¹¹ “Affirmative action aggressively includes individuals from protected groups as candidates in search processes, whereas equal employment opportunity,

8. George Bolander and Scott Snell, *Managing Human Resources*, 13th ed. (Mason, OH: Thomson South-Western, 2004), 53-54.

9. *Ibid.*, 73.

10. *Ibid.*, 755.

11. *Ibid.*

in a more passive fashion, addresses the avoidance of discrimination based upon protected group members.”¹² It should be noted that most colleges and universities in the US are federal contractors (as well as many municipalities), and thus are required to have an Affirmative Action plan in place. It is this requirement (and the perception that an individual was hired only to fill a quota, despite that person’s qualifications) that is the source of much of the controversy surrounding hiring of members of minority groups.

The justification often used for increasing diversity within for-profit organizations is the “business case,” which may be defined as the rationale for undertaking a strategy or a project. The hope is that the successful strategy or project will lead to greater profits, an increased customer base, higher sales, etc. Libraries are not profit-making organizations, so the argument for increasing diversity within the profession is not the drive to increase customers, etc. but to have the employees within the profession who are more reflective of the constituencies they serve. According to Howland, “an equally wide range of well-researched scholarship has been published addressing the concern that, as demographic indicators point to increasingly culturally and racially diverse communities, libraries need to recruit increasingly diverse professional staffs.”¹³ While the notion of “celebrating diversity” is quite common today, it is doubtful that there is a universal agreement on the definition of diversity. In fact, the application of the term “diversity” is not the same as legislative measures taken to redress prior instances of legalized discrimination. “Prior research has posited that diversity, as a term and a concept, is essentially a euphemism, designed to avoid the

12. Deetta Jones, “The Definition of Diversity” *Journal of Library Administration* 27, no. 1-2: (1999): 12.

13. Joan S. Howland, “Beyond Recruitment: Retention and Promotion Strategies to Ensure Diversity and Success.” *Library Administration & Management* 13, no. 1 (1999).

complexity and emotion laded natures of terms, such as race, racism, sex and sexism.”¹⁴

Librarianship is no different from any other profession such as law or accounting. There are various stages of employment within a profession: entry level, supervisory/management, and executives (deans/directors.) For librarianship, the first stage of recruitment may be the marketing of the profession, preparing those with an interest in library work (perhaps generated by library use as a child or by working in a library in high school or college). ALA has created a page on their website about librarianship as a career, and has also created a website about careers within librarianship (www.librarycareers.org). There is also a page on the careers website specifically addressing diversity, which makes mention of the ALA ethnic caucuses and scholarship programs directed at minority students (<http://librarycareers.drupalgardens.com/content/diversity-libraries>).

Winston’s Recruitment Theory identifies factors that influence the career choice of individuals, and according to Winston the factor that stands out for many in recruitment for librarianship is the desire to make a contribution. Better marketing of the profession and the skills necessary might take the profession beyond the impression of the “lady with bun and glasses” telling patrons to shush, and would probably go a long way to enhance the profession’s reputation. While some efforts have been made to change the perception of the profession, it is debatable as to success of those efforts.

Increasing Diversity – Educational Opportunities

Ask any librarian if they have spoken to someone who expressed surprise that being a librarian required a master’s degree, they would probably say “Yes.” Librarians are aware that many outside the profession

14. Mark Winston, Diversity in Librarianship: Is There a Color Line? in *The 21st Century Black Librarian in America: Issues and Challenges*, eds. Andrew P. Jackson, Julius Jackson, Julius Jefferson, Jr. and Akilah S. Nosakhere. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 204. (Winston on p. 131 in original document.)

have no understanding of the work they do and the skills and knowledge needed to do that work. However, for those who wish to be a credentialed professional librarian, a master's degree is almost always required. Graduate school is an investment and a commitment of numerous resources including finances and personal time. There are also the opportunity costs associated with committing to a graduate program. In recent years, there have been several programs designed to increase minority representation within professional librarian ranks by providing financial assistance for graduate education.

In 1997, ALA created the Spectrum Scholarship Program, designed to provide assistance to members of ethnic minority groups (American Indian/Native American, Asian, African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander) seeking a career in librarianship.¹⁵ The Spectrum Scholarship provides financial assistance for use towards an ALA accredited master's program, as well as connection to library professionals by using methods such as mentoring, networking assistance, stipends for professional association (ALA) membership dues and financial assistance for professional conference attendance (the annual ALA conference). According to Cooke, the creation of the Spectrum Initiative was not without controversy.¹⁶ As of 2009, there had been more than 600 graduates of the Spectrum Initiative. We have no way of knowing how many Spectrum Scholars (as they are known) would have entered LIS programs and become librarians without the assistance of the scholarship. However, if this program or others similar to it has had an impact on easing the entry barrier to the profession, we should celebrate the program and consider it to be a success.

Another initiative under the Spectrum program is the Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship, created to broaden diversity among those interested

15. American Library Association. "Spectrum – Scholarship Overview," <http://www.ala.org/offices/diversity/spectrum/scholarshipinformation>.

16. Nicole A. Cooke, "The Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship Program: Enhancing the LIS Professoriate," *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* 10, no. 1, (2014), <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7vb7v4p8>.

in becoming LIS educators. The program was created in 2006 by ALA and the University of Pittsburgh, and was funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which was established in 1996 under the National Foundation for Arts and Humanities. As with the Spectrum Scholars at the master's level, Cooke indicates that there was also resistance to supporting a program directed at minority groups for doctoral studies. In addition to the Spectrum programs, there are other programs designed to increase representation of minority groups within the profession (see **Table 3**).

Table 3. LIS Diversity Programs

Program Name	Institution	Targeted Group	Professional Focus
Academic Cultural Enrichment (ACE)	University of North Carolina -Greensboro	Underrepresented Communities	Academic, Community College and Public Libraries
Association of Research Libraries (ARL)/Society of American Archivists MOSAIC Program	Various	Underrepresented Communities	Archives, Special Collections
Association of Research Libraries/Music Library Association Diversity and Inclusion Initiative (DII)	Various	Unrepresented Communities	Music and Performing Arts Librarianship
Circle of Learning	San Jose State University	Native Americans and Alaska Natives	Increase the number of Native librarians who understand tribal culture and are committed to addressing the challenges faced by libraries serving Native patrons.
LIS Across Midwest Program (LAMP)	Various schools in the Midwest United States	Underrepresented Communities	N/A
Knowledge River	University of Arizona	Native Americans and Latinos	Cultural heritage services to Latino and Native American cultures.
Project IDOL	Wayne State University	Underrepresented Communities	N/A

Increasing minority representation within a profession does not stop at education. The next step is professional recruitment. As with so many other areas of our lives, technology has had an impact on

employment recruitment. Two generations ago, print advertisements in newspapers and professional association publications were probably the most common way of advertising for a job opening. Less common was college recruiting (usually used for entry level positions and for those in professional graduate programs such as law or business). For executive positions, a professional search firm may have been used. In a short period of time, employment recruitment has gone almost completely online. Employers advertise positions on their own websites, or advertise on online recruitment sites, including professional organization websites (ALA JobList, Special Librarians, etc.), or publications dedicated to a specific market, such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. There are also hundreds, perhaps thousands, of discussion lists dedicated to various branches of any profession and librarianship is no exception. Job postings are sent via email to members of a particular list and from the original email, the notice of the opening may be passed by the recipients to any number of other interested parties. Social media has also become a part of recruitment efforts, the most common probably being Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. However, seeing an ad is not enough; the advertisement must be attractive enough to a sufficient candidate pool in order to generate applicants worthy of consideration for an interview. Talent management is a lengthy process and advertisement is only one step in the recruitment process.

A common refrain from employers concerning recruitment is that they are not getting the talent that they need. Moreover when it comes to minority recruitment, according to the Association of Research Libraries Minority Recruitment and Retention in ARL Libraries Systems and Procedures Exchange Center (SPEC) report, “while some libraries are getting results, none are experiencing significant success.”¹⁷ If an organization is having difficulty attracting qualified candidates, they should take a strong look at their recruitment practices and assess both what

17. Association of Research Libraries, “Minority Recruitment and Retention in ARL Libraries - SPEC Kit 167,” (Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries, 1990), Introduction.

they are doing and what they are not doing to attract candidates. Issues resulting in a less than satisfactory talent pool include a less than competitive compensation and benefits structure or geographical locations that people may consider less than desirable for any number of reasons.

Providing Steps on the Career Ladder

In recent years, it has become increasingly difficult to find entry-level full-time professional librarian positions. *Library Journal* conducts an annual survey of library schools and their graduates. Participation is voluntary, and many LIS programs do not respond, nor do the graduates of the program. In the results published in 2013, data gathered from the 2012 graduates indicates that 30.7 percent of the approximate 1900 LIS graduates from that year responded to the survey.¹⁸ According to Gordon, many LIS graduates are pursuing a second or third career.”¹⁹ So while the problem of finding an entry-level position may be problematic within the profession, since the numbers of non-white librarians are so small in comparison, it would appear that it would be even more difficult for librarians of color to find an entry-level position. One way that some academic and governmental libraries (specifically the National Library of Medicine and the Library of Congress) are providing increased opportunities for recent graduates is by offering a post-graduate residency program. Often these programs are geared towards members of underrepresented populations, as is the Diversity Residency programs. These residencies are usually not permanent positions; they normally last from one to two years and are designed to expose the resident to various segments of academic or specialized governmental librarianship.

Residency programs may have a generalist or a specialist focus. Other academic library residency programs that while not geared to minority populations (North Carolina State University, University of Pennsylvania,

18. Stephanie L. Maatta, “The Emerging Data Librarian,” *Library Journal* 138, no. 17 (2013): 26.

19. Gordon, 62.

and University of Illinois at Chicago) should certainly be considered by people of color as a way to gain entry to librarianship, and ultimately gain an advantage in the job market when seeking a permanent position.

Of course, diversity residency programs (and there are actually very few of them) can give members of minority groups valuable exposure to professional librarianship, but should not be viewed as an all-compassing solution to the lack of diverse representation. Concerns noted by former residents include: being considered “interns as opposed to professional librarians, being singled out for representation when the libraries needed assistance with a multicultural or diversity initiative or having their minority status emphasized” according to Hu and Patrick.²⁰ In addition to academic libraries, two of the country’s largest library systems have programs similar to academic residencies: the New York Public Library and the Los Angeles County Public Library. While the residencies at the public libraries are not geared specifically towards underrepresented populations, public libraries, especially those in large urban areas like New York and Los Angeles, have very diverse populations. Such programs are a good way to attract librarians that mirror the communities in which they live and work, and perhaps more importantly, those who may be bilingual and have the language skills necessary to communicate with the patrons they are serving. Other initiatives to help retain and foster career development of minority librarians include the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Leadership and Career Development Program and the Minnesota Institute for Early Career Librarians.

Is Recruitment Still Necessary?

Recruitment into a profession by an organization is a multi-step process and may take many routes. Although it is not possible to see into the future, organization executives (library directors, deans, etc.) must somehow be able to determine a way to estimate what kind of work will need to be done in the future and the skills needed to do that

20. Sylvia Hu and Demetria E. Patrick, “Our Experience as Minority Residents,” *College & Research Libraries News* 67, no. 5 (2006): 297.

work. Workforce planning is a critical element of strategic planning, for which all library leaders will have at least partial responsibility. Elements that should be considered for workforce planning include, but are not limited to: economic factors (almost impossible to predict); competitive trends; technological changes; political and legislative issues; social concerns; and demographic trends. For some careers, recruitment is done at the college or graduate school level and begins while the potential recruit is still a student. To reach those who are no longer students, but actually working within the profession or desiring to work in the profession, recruitment involves making the job appear desirable to as many candidates as possible. Of course, all of this assumes that there is a vacant position that needs to be filled. In recent years, libraries have at best seen flat budgets, and at worst seen declining budgets. *Library Journal* reports that libraries have responded to these budget challenges in a variety of ways, including eliminating positions, personnel cross-training, using volunteers, hiring non-MLS holders to save salary dollars, outsourcing some professional tasks, and reducing hours and services.

Work conditions are another factor that can contribute to successful recruitment. For several years now we have seen a growth in part-time professional positions, and for many, part-time work is not desirable. It is probably safe to say that no one becomes a librarian because they want to be rich, but expecting to find a full-time job earning enough money to support oneself should be not unreachable.

We know that there are many new and recent LIS graduates looking for jobs and we know there are not enough jobs for all those who are looking for work. However, there are jobs openings within librarianship and those job openings include replacements for an employee who left the organization; a position that was reworked or reclassified based on some organizational change, such as a technological change; or a newly created position. How then, do you recruit for those jobs? More importantly, how do you attract people of color to those positions and get them to apply? This is especially important when you consider the barrier for entry to the profession (a master's degree) is higher than

some other professions, such as teacher or nurse, which only require a bachelor's degree for an entry level professional.

Shifting Focus to Diversity

Over the years since the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, there has been a shift from a focus on discrimination (perhaps by the mistaken belief that it no longer exists) to an emphasis on diversity. According to Kelly and Dobbin, “EEO/AA practices were soon recast as the diversity management component of the new human resources management paradigm. Practices designed to achieve legal compliance were re-theorized as efficient when the original impetus for adopting them was removed....”²¹ Ensuring equal opportunity by law is not the same thing as embracing diversity. Rarely will someone on a hiring committee come out and specifically say that they are not going to hire someone because of their gender, race, ethnicity, or religion; or at least say it out loud. Cotton, O’Neill, and Griffin indicate that bias in the hiring or promotional practice is more difficult to detect, and may not be known to the decision maker(s). Bias may be defined as “intentional and unintentional, conscious and subconscious, attitudes, behaviors and actions that have a negative and differential impact on segments of the society or favor one segment of society.”²²

These subtle forms of bias subtly impact the hiring and promotion process. For example, when selecting between two ‘equally qualified candidates,’ raters often will select the candidate who matches their stereotypical picture of the “right fit” for the position. They will arrive at this decision by accentuating the positive attributes of the traditional

21. Erin Kelly and Frank Dobbin, “How Affirmative Action Became Diversity Management: Employer Response to Antidiscrimination Law, 1962 to 1996” *American Behavioral Scientist* 41, no. 7 (1998): 962.

22. William Shakerford, “The New Face of Bias in the Workplace – 2011, Part 1 – The Subtlety of Bias,” Workforce Diversity Network, http://www.workforcediversitynetwork.com/res_articles_newfaceofbias_Shackelford.aspx.

candidate and, likewise, focusing on the negative attributes of the other candidate, or look for similar personal experiences to find common ground as justification for a hiring decision, experiences people of color may not have had. In addition, they may use the diversity characteristics of the candidates as strikes against them... Or, they may raise concerns about how customers (or employees) will respond if the person of color is hired/promoted.

Under these circumstances, the decision to hire/promote is not based solely on the qualifications of the candidates (objective criteria). It is greatly influenced by subjective criteria (their "fit"). When these subjective criteria relate to fixed diversity dimensions of candidates (race, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc.), the resulting decision is inherently bias. The organization may be blind to the biases and insist the process was fair and unbiased.²³

We can't attribute to bias or overt discrimination every instance of a person of color not getting an interview or a job offer or not being promoted. There are almost always more applicants than jobs, and there is usually only one vacancy. In a promotion situation, only one person can receive the promotion.

In one study, Hodge and Spoor found that 70% of the respondents identified personality/attitude and institutional fit to be "very important" criteria for job selection.²⁴ The same study found that the top three character traits for selecting a candidate were: intelligence, enthusiasm, and cooperativeness. While very few people want to work with colleagues who are considered unintelligent, there is no objective measurement for enthusiasm or cooperativeness. Those in hiring positions or serving on hiring committees might want to review their personal definition of "enthusiasm" and "cooperativeness" to see how the group defines those terms. They should consider how a candidate whose first language is not English and is being careful to not to use jargon that native English speakers take for granted as "unenthusiastic" or "uncooperative" or even "unintelligent." Using "organizational fit" as an acceptable way to judge whether or not someone is qualified for a position may also

23. Ibid.

24. Megan Hodge and Nicole Spoor, "Congratulations! You've Landed an Interview," *New Library World* 113, no 3 (2012): 139-161.

be an excuse not to hire them because the candidate does not fit the preconceived notion of “qualified” by the selection committee. Care should also be taken to avoid making assumptions that a candidate who has an outgoing personality is a more appropriate person for a position than a person who does not.

In spite of ALA’s diversity initiatives over the decades, the diversity of the profession has not increased significantly. Within all types of librarianship, but especially within academic libraries, the numbers of librarians of color have also not increased significantly in more than a decade. Academic librarians, especially those who are hired within a tenure/tenure track system, have additional hurdles such as the candidate being deemed qualified to do the scholarly work, research, and publishing that are necessary to obtain tenure. These are professional requirements not faced by librarians in non-academic settings. Publishing and service to the profession (and in some cases, service to the university) are important factors in order to obtain tenure; but perhaps more crucial is securing the votes of colleagues in support of your tenure candidacy. Types of research interests may also have an impact on tenure attainment. Tenured colleagues who have a vote on candidates’ tenure may not value the research done by colleagues from underrepresented populations if the research interest is not seen as important or scholarly.

For librarians at academic institutions that offer tenure (including those institutions that offer rank and promotion) developing a support network is even more crucial. There are numerous publications about the daunting and often subjective process of obtaining tenure, some specifically targeted at academic faculty members of color. However, the literature on tenure and librarians of color is not as prolific. In spite of the limited amount of professional literature on librarians of color achieving tenure, there is enough to provide evidence that the percentage of those not receiving tenure is higher for people of color than those of the majority population, according to Damasco and Hodges.²⁵

25. Ione T. Damasco and Dracine Hodges, “Tenure and Promotion Experiences of Academic Librarians of Color.” *College & Research Libraries* 73, no. 4 (2012): 279-201.

Successful navigation of a career takes skills and acumen beyond just excelling at the job one was hired to do and librarianship is no different.

Beyond Recruitment: Retention

According to the *Diversity Counts* study, “that credentialed librarians under age 45 comprised almost a third, 30% of the total for that category in 2000, yet accounted for 44% of credentialed librarians leaving the work force, speaks not so much to an inability to effectively recruit individuals to LIS education and practice as an inability to effectively retain them.”²⁶

People make decisions to leave a job or a career for many reasons, some of which may be unrelated to work conditions. Over recent decades we have seen workforce trends such as the emphasis on work-life balance. Employers know that retention of employees is a part of a successful talent management strategy. It is expensive to replace an employee who leaves a job. Library budgets are already stretched; using resources as a result of staff turnover in response to circumstances that can be controlled is not a good use of resources. Hiring an employee is an expensive investment. When you consider the costs (actual cash expenditures of recruiting and hiring an employee including marketing costs, travel expenses for the candidates, and relocation expenses; and non-monetary expenses, such as search or hiring committee time for reviewing applicant pools), as well as the opportunity costs of those employees whose normal job responsibility is not recruitment, it is clear that recruitment is expensive.

While less has been written about retention and librarians of color, there is no reason to expect that librarianship is any different from any other profession that loses employees because of the lack of opportunity for advancement or the feeling that their achievements are not valued in

26. American Library Association, *Diversity Counts*, 11.

the same manner as their white counterparts. St. Lifer and Nelson note that professional librarianship is no different than other professions regarding the concerns about a diverse workforce and the diversity of those within the higher ranks.²⁷ However, professions such as law and engineering do attract larger numbers of minorities, perhaps due the higher compensation for those professions. Given that it appears that minority librarians are underrepresented within the profession, when they are able to get professional librarian positions, why don't they stay? Why don't they rise to senior positions within the organization? As with other professions, the reasons are many. However, while there has been less written in library literature about retention of minority professionals, there is plenty of literature within management literature about employee retention. Here again, retention, leadership development, and succession planning are key components of the talent management strategy. According to Sullivan, little to no turnover might be bad news.²⁸ However, high turnover or turnover of only of specific types of employees should generally be a cause for concern. Each time an employee makes a decision to leave, the organization must revamp its operations until a replacement employee is recruited, hired, and trained to be able to provide value to the organization. Within the profession, in today's economic climate, it is not unusual to have a position not replaced or replaced by a part-time position. The entire organization suffers when competent people leave because they feel their talents are not recognized.

According to Klein, Mendoza, and Allers "diversity initiatives put in place may have the best intentions, but there are studies to show that

27. Evan St. Lifer and Corinne O. Nelson, "Unequal Opportunities: Race Does Matter," *Library Journal* 122, (1997): 42-46.

28. John Sullivan, "A Low Turnover Rate Could Mean That You Have Ugly Employees," ERE.NET, last modified August 8, 2011, <http://www.ere.net/2011/08/08/a-low-turnover-rate-could-mean-that-you-have-ugly-employees/>.

such programs are not effective. For people of color, gay, lesbians and women of all backgrounds, hidden biases can become hidden barriers in three major areas: commitment of the leadership, career development and feedback, and an unwelcoming environment.”²⁹

Commitment of the Leadership

Commitment of the leadership to having a diverse staff at all levels is essential. That commitment must also be put in practice by lower levels within the organization. One possible way to increase minority representation within management and leadership ranks is a version of the National Football League (NFL) “Rooney Rule, which says for all coaching and general manager jobs openings there must be a minority candidate who had to at least get an interview.”³⁰ While such a practice may be helpful, others may see the practice as offensive, as if the only qualification for the interview was race or ethnicity.

Mentoring

Mentoring is frequently cited as an important component to career success for all employees. For people of color, mentoring may be an even more crucial component, because “mentors help new employees understand the unwritten rules of the workplace such as the importance of socializing, the preferred organization style of communication, and the ins and outs of departmental politics.”³¹ These items are not written

29. Freada Kapor Klein, Martha Mendoza, and Kimberly Allers, *Giving Notice: Why the Best and the Brightest Leave the Workplace and How You Can Help Them Stay* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 2-5.

30. Monte Burke, “Why the NFL’s Rooney Rule Matters” *Forbes*, last modified January 26, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/monteburke/2013/01/26/why-the-nfls-rooney-rule-matters/>.

31. Joe Steele “Sharing the ‘Unwritten Rules’ Impacts Retention,” *Cultural Diversity at Work* 9, no. 6 (July 1997): 6, quoted by Linda Musser, “Effective Retention Strategies for Diverse Employees,” in *Diversity Now: People, Collections, and Services in Academic Libraries*, ed. Teresa Y. Neely and Kuang-Hwei (Janet) Lee-Smeltzer (New York: Haworth Press, 2002).

in a job description, but knowing how to successfully navigate them can mean the difference between job success or job failure. This is especially true for higher-level positions where the expectation is less on knowing how to do a job, but how to get work done through other people.

Mentoring may have many approaches, and having a mentor can help a new employee become acclimated to a new job. Mentoring can be also valuable to employees looking to advance their careers, make a career directional change (i.e. move from a public library to a special library), provide assistance with and for publication collaboration opportunities (crucial for many academic librarians), or ease the transition for an employee who has relocated to a new area.

While many mentoring relationships occur on an informal basis, professional organizations such as ALA and state library associations offer the opportunity for formal mentoring relationships for a variety of purposes such as new professionals, career progression, and peer mentoring. Librarians of color should not make the assumption that only people who look like them can be a mentor. First, since there are so few librarians of color, there are probably not enough to go around. Also, not all working professionals are interested in being a mentor. The mentoring relationship may have defined parameters for the purpose of the relationship according to the sponsoring organization, but a mentoring relationship is a highly personal and ultimately defined by the people in the relationship.

Career Development

Career development is something that organizations know they must focus on if they wish to retain quality employees. Career development is another tenant of a complete talent management strategy. Career development is something that every employee needs to think about, even if that employee does not aspire to be a manager or a leader. Rarely does an employee do the same job for their entire career or remain employed at the same institution. Even for those employed at the same institution, librarianship is constantly evolving so the acquisition of

new skills is required in order to meet the demands of the patron base. Failure to provide career development opportunities can be a reason employees leave an organization for other opportunities, especially if other employees are given opportunities to develop their careers.

Conclusions

In order to both increase the pipeline of new librarians and develop “bench strength” (which is a human resources term used to refer to the capabilities and readiness of potential successors to move into key professional and leadership positions), librarians of color can work to form and develop strong, sustaining professional networks (in and outside the employing library) in order to help navigate the hiring process and to develop a support network that can be utilized throughout a professional career. Developing a professional network need not be limited to those whose ethnicity, race and/or gender mirrors your own. In fact limiting oneself to a single group for support may be just that, limiting. However, the support these networks can provide when jobs are not obtained or promotions are not received can be crucial when trying to overcome the presumption of incompetence towards people of color by many with hiring authority. The fallacy that the best-qualified person always gets the job (or only the best qualified person gets the job) is just that—a fallacy. Hiring is always a subjective practice. The definition of “best qualified” will often vary with the person making the decision. The belief that the reason that more people of color are not included in the profession due to inferior qualifications and skills is false. Incompetence comes in all colors.

While strides have been made in terms of education, there are still barriers to entry into professional librarianship, including having an advanced degree, and fewer job openings for those at the entry level. In addition, many of the positions in libraries have a need for skills that are not just utilized within librarianship, but could be utilized in a variety of professions. When you consider that some of those professions offer

higher paying salaries, in professions that may have more flexibility in terms of experience, it is not surprising that many who could have gone into librarianship decided on another profession.

Studies have shown that in the resume evaluation process, those with ethnic sounding names are less likely to be called for an interview, yet alone hired.³² Other studies have looked at the differences in how the labor market can prevent (intentionally or otherwise) people of color from being successful. “The whites among those DiTomaso interviewed found 70% of the jobs they held over their lifetimes through inside information shared by a family member, friend, or neighbor, a direct intervention (someone walking a resume into a hiring manager’s office or a direct request that a family member or friend get an open job) or other means not open to the general public.”³³ While none of these studies were directed specifically at librarianship, we can assume that librarianship hiring practices does not differ significantly from other professions.

Leaders must be willing to invest in talent at all levels of the organization and understand that all employees do not have the same career aspirations, but organizations must have policies in place to ensure that those who do are provided an equal opportunity to realize those aspirations.

There is a need for people of color within the profession, with various skills, backgrounds and interests. As our country becomes more diverse, it is important that libraries provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for all that use it. Having people of color represented in

32. See: John Cotton, Bonnie O’Neill and Andrea Griffin. “The ‘Name Game’: Affective and Hiring Reactions to First Names,” *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 23, no. 1 (2008): 18-39 and Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan, “Are Emily and Brendan More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination.” *American Economic Review* 94, no. 4 (2004): 991-1013.

33. Janell Ross, “For Black Kids in American, a Degree is No Guarantee,” *Atlantic*, last modified May 27, 2014, <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/05/when-a-degree-is-no-guarantee/371613/>

the profession will ensure that libraries provide the services that mirror populations using them.

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