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Talent Management and New Trajectories: Preparing and Retaining Early Career Librarians

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Early Career Experiences in Academic Libraries

Top issues and concerns as surveyed and discussed in the 2015 ACRL roundtable:


Navigating Relationships
- Relationship with managers
- Relationship with colleagues
- "Old school" vs "New school" mentalities
- Differences in ideology and how things get done
- Making connections
- Internal politics

Understanding Organizational Culture
- Integrating into the workplace
- Assessing the culture
- Influencing/Changing
- Unwritten rules
- Reorganizations
- Power dynamics

Diversity + Inclusion
- Experiencing bias or discrimination based on age (at either end of the spectrum), race, gender
- Bullying by tenured faculty
- Desire to advocate for diversity
- Finding venues of support for POC and other racial and ethnic minorities

Imposter Syndrome
- Finding an authentic professional voice
- Looking like a student/too young to be here
- Leadership development

Work/Life Balance
- Managing time & expectations
- Project management
- Early burn out
- Strategizing opportunities
- Prioritizing commitments
- Being everything to everyone
- Saying yes to enough opportunities

Actions & Recommendations

For Early Career Librarians
- Research local cost of living and area highlights.
- Seek out mentorship if no formal path exists; getting engaged in your library’s culture is one indicator of early career satisfaction and retention.
- Say yes to informal opportunities for leadership; “lead from below” (Raab 2009).
- Look at long and short-term opportunities to serve in professional organizations, on campus, and in the library (Raab 2009).
- Perform self-evaluation, including measuring gains in competence (Hall-Ellis and Grealy 2013).

For Mentors & Administrators
- Inquire about a new hire’s preferred on boarding activities; follow through where possible.
- Engaged supervisor relationships with early career librarians can increase retention.
- New librarians value professional development support and the ability to contribute to a positive work environment.
- Formal mentorship empowers new librarians to grow and move into leadership positions (Hall-Ellis and Grealy 2013).

2017 Early Career Librarian Survey

Methodology: Nine question survey instrument adapted and re-administered with permissions from SPEC Kit: 344 Talent Management authors Taylor, M.A., and Lee, E. Data collected 3/2/2017-3/13/2017

Respondent Demographics: This survey received input from 402 respondents. The most common experience level was 3-4 years, with the majority of respondents reporting MLS training and positions in Reference and Instruction.

Onboarding Practices & Preferences
- New employee orientation to library/department
- New employee orientation to the academic institution
- "Informal mentoring: "family" supports with other librarians." (n=33)
- Formal mentoring program for new employees
- "New hire can unlock a new formal onboarding checklist with all new employees: it seems really independent and helpful now that it had been there for." (n=33)
- Formal orientation to new employees
- "We do not have a formal onboarding process. Superiors make it up as they go or it varies from department to department." (n=33)

Retention: Culture Matters

Early Career Retention Indicators (Employee Satisfaction):

- Most Positive Impact ($)
- Secondary Positive Impact (4)
- Other Library Opportunities
- Work Environment
- Salary

Top Reasons New Librarians Stay:
1. Position Responsibilities / Work Environment (tie)
2. Support of Professional Development
3. Benefits Package

Top Reasons New Librarians Leave:
1. Other Library Opportunities
2. Work Environment
3. Salary

Surveying ARL Libraries: SPEC Kit 344

Released in 2014, ARL SPEC Kit: 344 Talent Management, co-authored by Meredith Taylor and Elida Lee, surveyed 69 respondent ARL libraries regarding a variety of talent management issues in academic libraries, including:
- Recruitment and hiring
- Employee engagement
- Professional development planning
- Employee retention

General results for all employee demographics included:
- "Does Your Library Have a Leadership Development Program?"

Areas of Employee Satisfactory (5- Very Satisfied):
- Support of professional development
- Flexible work scheduling

Areas of Employee Dissatisfaction (1- Very Dissatisfied):
- Salary
- Communication within the organization

Top 3 Reasons for Turnover (All Employees):
- Retirement
- Other library positions
- Other employment outside of libraries

Bibliography


Relevant articles: