



Workforce and
Succession Planning
in the
Libraries of the
Australian Technology
Network

Preparing for Demographic Change

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Executive Summary

The looming demographic crisis in all areas of the workforce has special considerations for academic libraries and the universities in which they operate. The Librarians of the Australian Technology Network are concerned about their ageing workforce, the need for staff to reflect the diversity of the student populations and finding ways to ensure that all levels of staff are able to adapt to needed changes in library resources and service delivery. To consider how they can best prepare their workforce and be competitive in the hiring market, they are working at an individual and group level to develop workforce and succession plans.

All ATN libraries have activities in place that further workforce and succession planning. However, none of the libraries yet have plans that demonstrate to their university and their staff that they are committed to developing a pool of well-trained adaptable staff, professionals, and managers who see learning mobility and change as key to their careers and their professional development.

A Vision for the Workforce

In considering the workforce of the future, ATN libraries generally agree that staff need to be multi-skilled with a broad set of library and information management skills. However, the focus of the vision overall is on having staff demonstrate appropriate characteristics and attributes.

A diverse workforce is essential in order for ATN libraries to reflect more accurately the age, gender, ethnicity and cultural background of their users and to bring a broader range of ideas and perspectives to the library. What is also needed are strategic thinkers, people who see and understand the big picture and the environment within which their library operates. These people also need the ability to be adaptable, flexible, to take risks, to embrace innovation and to be realistic about what can be done.

Obstacles to creating this vision include poor reward systems, a focus on skills rather than on attributes in the hiring process, bureaucracy and burdened processes, reactivity rather than proactivity, lack of opportunities for change, lack of resources and time, and too few adequate training and development opportunities. These obstacles are at both the library and university levels.

Recommendations

This report presents a large number of recommendations that consider succession and workforce planning in every aspect of the recruitment, retention, training and career planning of all staff in libraries. Succession and workforce planning must be integrated into the library's strategic plan and into the day-to-day administration and work of every library organization and at every staff level.

While the recommendations are all encompassing each library will choose from amongst the recommendations to build their own plan.

Key recommendations are:

1. Develop a Written Plan

No ATN library has yet in place a written workforce and succession plan for their library, although each library has programs that could be the beginning of or be part of a plan. The written plan should outline goals, obstacles and issues that must be overcome and specific actions that will work toward meeting the plan's priorities and measuring its success. The plan should include levels of accountability for ensuring that the plan is completed.

2. Change Recruitment, Hiring and Retention Practices

All ATN libraries require changes in their recruitment and hiring process to focus less on hiring for specific skills and positions and more on abilities such as flexibility, adaptability, leadership potential and learning agility.

3. Recognize Good Work and Abilities

Staff should be helped to realize that good work, creativity and leadership will be recognized and rewarded. Awards and the communication of achievements to others are important aspects of this.

4. Encourage Professional Development and Higher Education

It is essential that plans be in place to continue to develop the skills, attitudes, and approaches of staff at all ATN libraries. All staff should be encouraged to develop and excel at the work that they do.

5. Develop Leaders and Managers

Identifying and developing individuals to take on future leadership roles is crucial. Senior library management teams must take the responsibility to ensure that the library has the leadership over the long term to carry it forward.

6. Work with the Library Education Community

There is a need for the Australian and New Zealand library communities to begin a dialogue and improve relationships overall with its library education communities. This is essential if the curriculum taught and types of individuals chosen by the schools are to match what is needed by library employers.

7. Work with Others

While succession and workforce planning is important on an individual library level, it is also important for ATN libraries to work amongst themselves and with other libraries and associations to ensure that the profession itself is attracting adequate and appropriate people to its ranks.

Conclusion

ATN libraries have already taken the first step to considering the importance of workforce and succession planning to their future. By developing a plan, establishing it as a priority and a long-term commitment, communicating it to library staff, championing it with university administration and measuring its succession, all ATN libraries will ensure that they have the right people with the needed attributes, skills and qualities that will be needed to serve their user community.

Background and Introduction

Media and research reports in Australia and North America point to the possibility of a crisis in all areas of the workforce as members of the Baby Boomer generation begin to reach retirement. With seasoned professionals, managers, experts and faculty members moving on in their lives, all types of organizations, if they are unprepared, could be placed in the vulnerable position of not having enough skilled staff if they have not prepared for this exodus. This demographic tension is even more complex when the changing expectations and needs of younger generations (Traditionalists, Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y) are taken into account. With four major demographic groups sharing the work world, the need for planning and change become even more paramount.

Universities find themselves in a unique place within this environment, with demands by students and graduates shaking their traditional cultures and the delivery of their programmes at the same time as faculty and staff retire. As the member universities of the Australian Technology Network grow and expand their research and PhD programmes, the need for a large pool of qualified faculty and instructors becomes even more critical.

The Librarians of the Australian Technology Network have concerns about their ageing workforce, the need for staff to reflect the diversity of the student populations and finding ways to ensure that all levels of staff are able to adapt to needed changes in library resources and service delivery. To consider how they can best prepare their workforce and be competitive in the hiring market, they asked Vicki Whitmell of Whitmell & Associates to work with them at an individual and group level to develop workforce and succession plans following a proposal by the 2004 LATN convenor Dr. Alan Bundy (UniSA). To the reviewer's knowledge this is the first time a national group of academic libraries has commissioned such a study.

Between June and August 2004 Vicki Whitmell visited the libraries at Curtin University, University of South Australia (UniSA), RMIT University, University Technology Sydney (UTS), Queensland University of Technology (QUT), and Auckland University of Technology (AUT). Each visited lasted two to three days and consisted of a workshop and meetings with library management and staff, human resource professionals and administrators. The goal of the project was to identify overall issues and concerns related to succession and workforce planning among the ATN libraries and their universities and to make recommendations for the LATN group as a whole and its individual members to address these issues.

This report uses the terms workforce planning and succession planning interchangeably. Workforce planning broadens succession planning to go beyond identifying and training people for specific key positions to include strategies related to education, recruitment, retention, training, professional development and mentoring of staff. Both are seen as being holistic in nature, important for all staff at all levels in the library. The aim of both is to create a large group of well-trained and adaptable staff, professionals and managers who will be available and willing to adapt to meet the needs of the future.

Generally it was found that all ATN libraries have activities in place that further workforce and succession planning. Such activities include:

- formal programmes to encourage and support professional development
- workforce exchanges either within or outside of the library
- peer reviews of skills and performance
- strategic plans that consider succession and workforce planning
- training programmes that involve exposure to a wide range of library programs and activities
- classification levels that encourage advancement
- 'big-picture hiring' and
- staff awards.

However, none of the libraries has in place plans that demonstrate to its university and staff that it is committed to developing a pool of well-trained adaptable staff, professionals, and managers who see learning mobility and change as key to their careers and their professional development.

Factors Influencing Workforce and Succession Planning

While the ageing of the workforce is of considerable concern to the library profession, other factors also impact workforce and succession planning in Australian libraries. The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) has identified its concerns about the ageing workforce (see the regular *Workwatch* column in *inCite*), however, the library community as a whole has not yet considered the issue of workforce and succession planning. Early work is being undertaken in Canada and the United States¹ on the extent of the impact of the ageing workforce on libraries, but comprehensive data is not available for either Australia or New Zealand. Without such information the full extent of the issue cannot be determined and the profession will be unable to ready itself for future change.

While it may be apparent that a large number of retirements are looming, there is a great deal of uncertainty among the profession about the skills and positions that will be required to replace those who are leaving. All evidence, however, points to the need for adaptability and flexibility in staff, with less focus on one particular job or set of skills. Hiring practices, however, still remain focused on hiring individuals based on their expertise in a particular area, such as cataloguing or reference, rather than on their learning abilities and characteristics such as risk taking, flexibility and ability to manage change. Libraries are still hiring for today's needs rather than the needs of the library in the future.

As well, large libraries, such as those represented by ATN libraries, are often quite hierarchical in nature, with layers of staff and management and separate divisions for public and technical services. Little cross-functional training is done and staff members are seldom given the opportunity to participate and learn in interdepartmental teams. Traditional organizational structures such as these tend to place staff into limited functions with little opportunity for professional development and growth. These structures are, in particular, limiting for younger staff.

Unfortunately, the stereotypical image of the library profession continues. This, combined with relatively low pay scales and the limited number of positions available over the past years, have impacted efforts by the profession to attract a more diversified workforce that reflects the age, culture, ethnicity and experience of younger academic library users.

As well, younger groups have a different approach to work, career development and the use of technology to communicate and provide library services. A key issue emerging within libraries then is how best to ensure that these demographic groups are able to understand one other, communicate well and work together. This takes effective education, training, mentoring and planning.

The Generational Divide

Much has been written about the differences between the Boomers and the generations that follow them. Just as the Boomers differed from the Traditionalists, the group that it followed, so too do Generations X and Y differ from the Boomers.

The Boomers are a generation that sought change in organizations yet continued to put a great deal of emphasis on their careers and faith in the organizations in which they worked. The younger generations' focus will be somewhat different. While their careers will be important to them, they will strive for a greater balance in their lives and will show less allegiance to the organization than has been the case with many who have worked in libraries in the past.

These are groups who put a premium on work-life balance and flexibility and whose members are willing to sacrifice salary and status for more time for themselves and their families and for more variety in their careers. This group also puts a premium on results rather than on process. This means that they will focus less on how the work gets done than on what the results will be. They will place less emphasis on guidelines, procedures, structures and organizational hierarchies.

Members of these groups are also very aware of the importance of continued and lifelong learning and have high expectations that their employers will provide continued and ongoing professional development and training. If unhappy with their current situation they will be quick to capitalize on other job opportunities. While Boomers tend to view such movement and change as disloyal, younger workers see it as being flexible.

While the members of these groups generally work well with others, many of them see themselves more as individual contributors than as members of a team. When in a group they expect to work with others on an equal footing, not within a hierarchy. Quite often this approach will clash with the team concepts that have been in vogue during the last decade. Overall this group is characterized as being unimpressed with authority and will treat the chief librarian as they would the receptionist.

The members of these groups entering libraries will have higher expectations of the profession and its organizations as a whole and will be seeking to work with and for organizations that value service and keep their promises, that provide a flexible work environment with few levels or hierarchies, that support continuing education and lifelong learning, that value self-starters and welcome new and creative ideas.

Older Workers

The Boomers themselves are changing. The focus of their lives may be on ageing parents, on developing personal interests or exploring new and different challenges in their work environment. As this group moves into the later stages of their careers, they will be looking for greater flexibility in the type of work that they do. This might mean taking on fewer administrative responsibilities or easing into retirement through part-time work.

According to a recent research brief, entitled *An Ageless Australian Workforce* (2004), written by Renee Giskes at the Queensland Parliamentary Library, Australia has developed a culture of early retirement (voluntary and otherwise). A 2003 study by S. Encel reported that over 50% of females indicate that they intend to retire from full-time work before reaching the age of 65.² A continuation of this trend will only accelerate the impact of demographic change and available labour supply in Australian libraries—a workforce dominated by females. It is clear that libraries will have to find ways to encourage older workers to continue to stay in the workforce, especially as the supply of younger workers is unlikely to keep pace with the numbers leaving. Thus, it will be even more important for libraries to consider ways to encourage older workers to stay in the workforce, even if in a more limited role.

One way will be to ensure that older workers keep their skills and competencies relevant. This can be done through training (or re-training), mentoring and ongoing guidance. Making sure that all workers, regardless of age, still feel that they are of value and that what they do is important, is also key.

The Impact on Libraries

Demographic change will significantly alter libraries. However, many Boomers and Traditionalists fail to acknowledge the unique issues and characteristics facing the younger generations and many older workers have not had an easy time adjusting to younger people in their organizations. This is not a new issue in the workplace—what is new is that there are four generations in libraries, with big gaps in approach and communicating style. The situation is forcing administrators to acknowledge diversity and the need for a greater focus on planning and recruitment, to re-examine the structure and culture of their organizations and to recognize the need for continued education, training and career development.

ATN libraries should also recognize that the generational divide is having a big impact on their library users. Just as the younger generations working in libraries have different approaches to technology, communicating, working and gathering information, so too do library users. This is forcing libraries to reconsider how they provide services and develop collections for younger generations. The importance of the Generations X and Y to libraries to assist in developing new services and finding ways of reaching out to users is thus becoming more and more important.

ATN Library Issues

Visits to ATN libraries and discussions with management and staff indicated a significant number of concerns about the readiness of ATN universities, ATN libraries and the Australian and New Zealand library community to address succession and workforce planning issues. These concerns are:

- Lack of coordinated national response to the issue by the Australian and New Zealand library communities
- Concern about succession planning at three levels:
 - Replacement of directors and senior management staff³
 - Replacement of key supervisors, team leaders and skilled⁴ professionals
 - Ensuring that the staff complement reflects the diversity of student populations (age, culture, language, experience) and that it is well-trained, multi-skilled, flexible, knowledgeable and adaptable
- Weighing the value of corporate knowledge (internal applicants) against the need for new ideas and experiences (outside applicants)
- The availability of a pool of qualified applicants within the local area and/or willing to relocate
- Concern about the quality and education of newly-graduated students from library education programs
- Poor or limited relationships with Australian and New Zealand professional library education programs across the board, often leading to a disconnect between the needs of the library community and the types of students being chosen and the education they receive
- Short-term retention—being able to keep good workers after time invested in their training
- Long-term retention—staff unable and/or unwilling to look for opportunities outside of their current position, leading to inertia, lack of motivation and lack of new ideas flowing into the organization
- A current focus on hiring for skills rather than attributes. A recognition of the need to “hire for attitudes; train for skills.”⁵
- Lack of awareness among staff about workforce and succession planning in general (including the misconception that it may be about getting rid of older workers) and specific library and university programs in workforce and succession planning
- Low salaries vis-a-vis other libraries in the local area or with other ATN libraries
- Low salaries overall for the library profession
- Lack of opportunities for lower level staff to gain experience in the supervision of others and to have budget responsibility
- Cultures that support the “Tall Poppy Syndrome,” discouraging individuals to either identify themselves, or be identified by others, as interested in or being able to take on greater responsibility and/or leadership positions

- Small staff complements which limit the time available for staff to develop themselves and participate in teams and limit the internal talent pool
- Limited career paths for lower level staff members (e.g. technicians, library assistants)
- Classification schemes that focus on and reward staff responsibility and tasks only which may discourage the development of professional excellence
- Being able to find ways to identify and retain exceptional people
- Being able to attract and recruit indigenous staff
- Lack of mentoring programs
- Lack of university-wide workforce and succession plans among ATN members
- Difficulties in hiring and developing those who are different
- Finding the time, funding and champions for putting into place workforce and succession plans.

The Vision for the Workforce

A workshop was held with each of the ATN libraries. During the workshops participants were asked to describe what they want their library workforce to look like. Although it was generally agreed that staff needed to be multi-skilled—with a broad set of library and information management skills—the focus of the vision overall was on characteristics and attributes.

A diverse workforce is seen as essential. Diversity is needed in age, gender, ethnicity, cultural background and education. Greater diversity is required so that the libraries can reflect more accurately the age, gender, ethnicity and cultural background of their users. It is also needed to bring a broader range of ideas and perspectives to the library.

What is also needed are strategic thinkers, people who see and understand the big picture and the environment within which their library operates. These people also need the ability to be adaptable, flexible, to take risks, to embrace innovation and to be realistic about what can be done.

The workshop groups also valued people who have good interpersonal skills, who enjoy their lives, lead a balanced lifestyle and are committed to lifelong learning.

The organizational commitment to staff includes rewarding them well and valuing their contributions.

Not all workshop groups had the time to consider the obstacles to creating this vision of their workforce. Those that did felt that poor reward systems, a focus on skills rather than on attributes in the hiring process, bureaucracy and burdened processes, reactivity rather than proactivity, lack of opportunities for change, lack of resources and time, and too few adequate training and development opportunities, were all impediments to achieving their vision.

Recommendations

This report presents a large number of recommendations under a variety of headings. Some libraries already have in place some of these suggestions. The intent of the broad range of recommendations is to remind ATN libraries that workforce and succession planning should play a part in every aspect of the recruitment, retention, training and career planning of all staff in libraries and that succession and workforce planning should be integrated into its strategic plan and into the day-to-day administration and work of every library organization and at every staff level.

While the recommendations are all encompassing, each library will choose from amongst the recommendations to build their own plan.

1. Develop a Written Plan

Currently no ATN library has yet in place a written workforce and succession plan for their library, although each library has programs that could be the beginning of or be part of a plan. The written plan should outline goals, obstacles and issues that must be overcome and specific actions that will work toward meeting the plan's priorities and measuring its success. The plan should include levels of accountability for ensuring that the plan is completed. Without a plan it is unlikely that any real progress can be made in addressing the issues identified above.

- 1.1. Each ATN library should develop an individual workforce and succession plan for their library. This plan should be identified as a priority in their strategic plan and recognized as such by the library and its senior management
- 1.2. As part of this plan, an inventory of skills, aptitudes, and attitudes needed for both the short and long term should be developed in order to identify areas of focus for recruitment and personal and professional development
- 1.3. The process outlined in the plan should be simple (limit paperwork where possible) and reviewed often
- 1.4. Get everyone involved in thinking about and preparing themselves for the future workforce
- 1.5. Communicate the plan. By letting people know that you have one, it shows that you value their contributions, are thinking about the future of the library and that you are paying attention to staff and their role in the library's future
- 1.6. Demonstrate the benefits. Part of communicating the plan will be to show how the library and its individual staff will benefit over both the short and long term of having a plan in place
- 1.7. Measure success. Success will be different for each library and may include a number of measures, including attracting better qualified candidates, having longer retention of current staff, having a more diverse workforce, having more staff ready for promotion and having available excellent internal and external candidates for key positions. Determining these success measures

and how they will be evaluated will be an important part of the plan

- 1.8. Get commitment to the plan from university administration. If possible, have a senior university administrator champion the plan.

2. Change Recruitment, Hiring and Retention Practices

All ATN libraries, both at the senior management and staff levels, indicated the need for changes in the recruitment and hiring process to focus less on hiring for specific skills and positions and more on abilities such as flexibility, adaptability, leadership potential and learning agility. There was also recognized a need to take a 'big picture' approach to hiring—looking at vacancies and new positions as opportunities to rethink current staff complement across the board, rather than as isolated events. To change these practices, ATN libraries must:

- 2.1. Revise selection and promotion criteria to focus on learning agility, personal attributes and leadership qualities. A balance must be maintained between these criteria and needed technical or professional skills
- 2.2. Discuss with human resource departments and workplace unions the need for workforce and succession planning
- 2.3. Look to hire those who have different approaches, outlook, culture and backgrounds than those now working in the library
- 2.4. Consider the Curtin University model of hiring for all vacant and new positions at the same time each year. This practice allows Curtin to take an organization-wide perspective on positions and the people that are needed to fill them. This practice also allows Curtin to build on needed skills and aptitudes across the board and allows staff to move between jobs within the library more easily. This model can be adapted to meet the hiring needs of ATN libraries. At a minimum, all vacancies or new positions should be considered by the senior management team as to how the hiring could impact the development of needed skills and aptitudes and how changing the position would help to work toward the goals of the workplace and succession plan. No position should be hired for in isolation
- 2.5. Consider 'broadbanded' classification levels. This approach is in place at UTS and QUT. Staff are hired at, for example, a level 5-6, rather than a level 5 only. This allows the library to offer a more competitive salary, but also provides more room for staff to move upward. Rising within this broader salary range is best done through peer review and/or attaining a certain 'advanced' skill set or expertise. Libraries using the model have seen a better quality of applicants and greater commitment by individuals in their personal development, especially those who are seeking to advance within their salary range
- 2.6. Show that you value your staff by advocating for increased salaries and/or classifications
- 2.7. Reduce hierarchies within libraries and its departments as a way of giving people greater responsibility at the individual level and

- creating a more attractive organization for younger workers who prefer flatter structures
- 2.8. Reduce gaps in salary/status/classification between professional and non-professional staff. This also means working toward a change in attitude among professionals about the role and importance of non-professional staff and how it should be recognized and rewarded
 - 2.9. Ensure that staff are introduced to all parts of the library and its resources and services. This may mean an orientation to each department upon hiring or a requirement for staff to work in key departments at some point in their early development. An excellent model is UniSA. It requires all professional staff to work for six months in the flexible delivery/distance learning department. Such a program will both stimulate interest in other parts of the library and help to create more cross-departmental teams and knowledge
 - 2.10. Be willing to hire staff from public, special and college libraries. Be also willing to hire those without specific sets of skills or experience, but with potential
 - 2.11. Deal with poor performance in a timely fashion. Make difficult decisions to replace poor performers
 - 2.12. Undertake long-term recruitment campaigns. While vacancies may not be available now, identifying people who may be interested in working for the library in the future is important, especially as today's workforce reaches retirement and there will be greater competition for those to replace them. Possibilities for such a campaign include:
 - Keeping in touch with alumni working in other organizations so that they may assist in identifying potential candidates or consider returning
 - Holding a celebratory lunch for local library education award winners and student leaders. This serves to identify potential staff and to discuss opportunities available now or in the future
 - Demonstrating that your library is a great place to work through articles in the library literature and presentations at library conferences and by having staff attend conferences
 - Encouraging staff to talk to others about joining your library and to prepare themselves for future job opportunities
 - Looking for ways to improve your profile in the library community
 - Being involved in mentoring programs and networks
 - Be known as a good employer.

3. Recognize Good Work and Abilities

Help staff to realize that good work, creativity and leadership will be recognized and rewarded. Help them to feel good about their accomplishment by:

- 3.1. Creating staff awards at the library or university level. The awards should reflect excellence in service provision, innovation and team or individual accomplishments. Profile the award winners and encourage others to apply. (QUT does an excellent job of

- promoting its award winners inside the library and in its annual report.) Such awards can create both an awareness of the type of work that is valued and can set goals for individuals and teams
- 3.2. When announcing promotions or new hires state why people were chosen, for e.g. “for excellence in customer service and the development of new products.” This helps to set examples for others to aspire to
 - 3.3. Make note of staff individual or team achievements in communications or newsletters within or about the library.

4. Encourage Professional Development and Higher Education

Recognizing that once hired many library staff members will commit long term to the organization, it is essential that plans be in place to continue to develop the skills, attitudes, and approaches of staff while they are part of the library. While it should be recognized that not all staff aspire to or are capable of holding supervisory or management positions, all staff should be encouraged to develop and excel at the work that they do. To do this, ATN libraries should:

- 4.1. Encourage staff to take a proactive stance in their own career development and evaluate their progress during their annual performance evaluation and throughout the year
- 4.2. Create a program that identifies the overall professional development and training needs of the library for each year. Staff wishing to attend training sessions, seminars or conferences should apply for and be chosen to attend based on the value of the session to the library as a whole and to the individual’s stated career plan
- 4.3. Encourage staff to have short, medium and long-term action plans for development, recognizing that these plans will need to be updated regularly
- 4.4. Encourage and support (financially, if possible) lower level staff to get their library science designations. This building from within has proven to be very beneficial to organizations such as the Hamilton Public Library (Ontario, Canada) and the Broward County Library (Florida, U.S.)⁶ allowing them to grow a staff of educated librarians and support staff who have demonstrated loyalty and experience to bring to the library
- 4.5. Provide coaching to supervisors/evaluators on how to deliver feedback and have open and frank dialogues about performance and possible opportunities
- 4.6. Host conferences and professional development seminars locally. Bring speakers to your library on areas of interest and need. These seminars can be opened to allow others in the library or university community to attend on either a free or cost recovery basis. Bringing conferences in-house, such as done by UniSA, will allow all staff to attend, profile the library within the local library community and give staff the opportunity to plan, organize and market events
- 4.7. Take advantage of your university’s relationships with industry experts and use them as speakers and trainers

- 4.8. Consider peer reviews by those holding similar positions at other universities. These serve as both an evaluation and learning practice
- 4.9. Get staff closer to users. This encourages the development of customer relations skills and the recognition and understanding of changing user needs and requirements. It also encourages self-development and greater awareness of library services and resources. Consider the AUT model where all staff up to the Team Leader level are required to work at the public service desk for a minimum number of hours each week
- 4.10. Consider workforce mobility programmes like those at RMIT and job exchange and shadowing programs that allow staff to learn more about other library departments. Make them a priority among managers and staff
- 4.11. Get staff involved in the LATN consultancy group, visiting other libraries to demonstrate and learn about best practices
- 4.12. Consider forming a professional literature club to discuss articles from the library literature and how ideas from them can be used in the library

5. Develop Leaders and Managers

While it is important that workforce and succession planning be applied throughout the library, the importance of identifying and developing individuals to take on future leadership roles is crucial. There may be resistance to supporting individuals with potential to move into management and supervisory roles, but the senior library management team must take the responsibility to ensure that the library has the leadership over the long term to carry it forward and to advocate for the library within the the university. While it is likely that some leaders will be sought outside of the library, individuals must also be developed for leadership positions within the library. To do this ATN libraries should

- 5.1. Identify staff with leadership and management potential. The identification of these people should be done at the senior management level with input from supervisors, managers and peers
- 5.2. Help all staff to recognize that identifying people for leadership roles is only one part of the workforce plan and that everyone has a role to play, including developing their expertise and abilities in the job that they do
- 5.3. Create a work and career path development plan for those identified to ensure that they are able to build their skills and capabilities over time as needed. Find ways to give them responsibility for staff and budget, including working with special project teams, external university teams and opportunities for exchanges and secondments (inside and of the outside library *and* inside and outside of the university)
- 5.4. Consider the model of the University of Melbourne that has developed an in-house leadership programme for its staff. The goal of the programme is to “expand the development approach...so that staff take a longer term view of their development and gain access to leadership resources and continuing professional development.”⁷

- 5.5. Consider the development of a formal mentoring program or mentoring networks. Staff and/or management at all ATN libraries expressed concern about the difficulty of maintaining formal mentoring programmes either within the library or within the university. Such programmes can be difficult to sustain for the long term, particularly without an individual or group to take responsibility for them, or to find the right fit of individuals to work one-on-one with each other. While developing a formal program might be the best approach for some ATN libraries, others might consider mentoring networks. In this model the library and its managers would take the responsibility for helping to recognize the potentially helpful relationships that individual staff now have through work on teams or special projects, contacts with former co-workers or supervisors, or within groups they may be working with at the university, community or professional association level. Training should be provided on how they can make the best use of these contacts and relationships. Staff would be encouraged to develop their own mentors and to allow time for them to do this. Such mentor relationships should be encouraged in particular when the staff member is looking to take on a new responsibility or position, or is looking for advice in a particular professional or personal area.

6. Work with the Library Education Community

There is a need for the Australian and New Zealand library communities to begin a dialogue and improve relationships overall with its library education communities. While some reports indicate that individual relationships between schools and ATN libraries are improving, better discourse between all members of the library community and its associations with library educators is essential if the curriculum taught and types of individuals chosen by the schools are to match what is needed by library employers. Improving this relationship can happen at both the local and national levels:

- 6.1. Get staff involved as much as possible with local library education programs (university and TAFE level). Offer student practicums and have staff act as instructors and guest lecturers. Such involvement will help to increase the awareness of what and how the students are being taught, will help to bring a real life perspective to the students' education and will, perhaps, allow the library to exert some influence in the curriculum and choice of students. Benefits also include being able to identify upcoming students as potential staff members for your library
- 6.2. LATN should host a national conference (perhaps in conjunction with ALIA/LIANZA or other library associations/consortia) to bring together educators, libraries and students to discuss issues related to the future workforce needs of libraries and to hear from experts about how educators and libraries can work more closely together to meet those needs. The result of the conference should be the creation of a working party with representatives of all groups (employers, educators, students, associations) that will have ongoing discussions about the future workforce needs of the library community

- 6.3. LATN should encourage the Australian and New Zealand library educators to consider creating a forum or association (perhaps a chapter of ALIA/LIANZA) for them to network and learn from each other. (As an example, the directors of Canada's library schools meet once a year to discuss common issues and concerns during the American Library Association conference.) This would be similar to gatherings that occurred at conferences many years ago.

7. Work with Others

While succession and workforce planning is important on an individual library level, it is also important for libraries to work with other libraries and associations to ensure that the profession itself is attracting adequate and appropriate people to its ranks.

- 7.1. LATN should work as a group with other libraries, library associations and library education programs to consider ways to attract students to the profession (consider widening the "Looking for a Career?" campaign (seen in Western Australia and South Australia) nationally)
- 7.2. Work with national library associations and governments to undertake a statistical analysis of the library profession focusing on the impact of demographics and the future staffing needs of libraries
- 7.3. Consider working with other library associations and national libraries to develop scholarship programs and incentives for indigenous students to consider careers in library work. (One possible model is the Ontario Library Association's Grace Buller Aboriginal Student Fellowship.⁸)
- 7.4. Publicize the final report of this project with other members of the Australian and New Zealand library communities to develop greater understanding of the issues and what needs to be done.

Conclusion

By participating in this joint project ATN libraries have already taken the first step to considering the importance of workforce and succession planning to their future. By developing a plan, establishing it as a priority and a long-term commitment, communicating it to library staff, championing it with university administration and measuring its success, all ATN libraries will ensure that they have the right people with the needed attributes, skills and qualities that will be needed to serve their user community.

Footnotes

¹ The Canadian Library Association, in partnership with the Canadian Museums Association and the Canadian Council of Archives, is undertaking a survey of succession planning and HR issues in the Canadian heritage sector, and the Special Libraries Association, in partnership with a number of other associations and universities is conducting a research study on the future of librarians in the workforce.

² (Sol Encel, *Age Can Work: The Case for Older Australians Staying in the Workforce: A Report to the Australian Council of Trade Unions and Business Council of Australia (2003)* www.bca.com.au/upload/AGEDOCfinal22.04.03.pdf).

³ It is noted that of the six university library directors of LATN:

- one retirement is scheduled for 2005 and another is likely for 2007-2008
- all incumbent directors were hired externally to their positions.

⁴ Statistics provided by ATN libraries indicate a large proportion of their workforce (with the exception of AUT) are over the age of 45. (AUT 31%, Curtin 53%, QUT 41%, RMIT 47%, UniSA 51%, UTS 49%.

⁵ Motto of Southwest Airlines

⁶ McConnell, Carole. "Staff and Leadership Shortages? Grow Your Own: A Florida system looks inward to address the looming librarian shortage." *American Libraries* (October 2004): 34-36.

⁷ For details contact Jillian Houston at (03) 8344 7080.

⁸ The purpose of the scholarship is to subsidize a student of Aboriginal heritage to better connect with information management technology and systems and encourage the growth of information services in native communities. For information: http://www.accessola.com/site/showPage.cgi?page=awards/scholarship_intro.htm.

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