New Directions Snapshot:  
What Is the Future of Jobs in the University Library?  
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OVERVIEW

The future of the University Library is integral with a competent, knowledgeable and multi-disciplined work force. The Library will increasingly engage in knowledge management in the new age. This new direction will require a diverse workforce of talent expert in various subject and multi-disciplined areas as well as information technology and functional areas.

Currently, the Library has an aging workforce population, and is active in recruitment at all job classification levels. The Library will strategically plan and manage the event of current and continuing workforce attrition as an opportunity to re-configure vacancies into New Direction positions, and recruit diverse, hybrid professional talent.

The UC Berkeley Library is a world-class research library institution. As such, it values its traditional expert talent pool and legacy collections, as the cornerstone that has differentiated the Library from other libraries. As the recent national trend in non-traditional, multi-disciplinary library positions begins to transform the Library workforce and Library services; the Library must sustain this critical balance between the evolving hybrid, multi-disciplinary library professional or non-traditional role with the Library’s traditional role of building its deep knowledge pool in unique and historically strong subject and functional areas in order to maintain the Library’s world-class stature and excellence.

NATIONAL TRENDS

Traditional vs. Non-Traditional Library Positions

- National data shows a shifting of resources in research libraries from traditional jobs to new ones.
- A decline of 63% in cataloger positions between 1990 and 1998 and an increase of 72% in functional specialist positions and/or non-traditional positions.
- In 2005, people in non-traditional positions accounted for 23% of professionals at research libraries compared to 7% in 1985.
- 39% of library professionals under age 35 work in non-traditional jobs, compared with only 21% of those age 35 and older.
- 58% of under-35 non-traditional employees work in information technology (IT) positions; such positions constitute the second largest job category at libraries, behind reference.
- New and non-librarian professional assignments are approaching assignment to almost 50% of professional library staff.
• New areas are emerging and already evolving for academic libraries as publishers, educators, research and development organizations, entrepreneurs, and policy advocates.

**Librarian Positions vs. Non–Librarian Positions**

• Skill sets for library professionals will continue to evolve. LIS programs will be forced to create new, shorter routes to the MLIS. There is a need to ensure that the skills, knowledge, and values of the librarian profession will not be diluted or lost.

• A new kind of library professional - “Feral professionals” work in jobs that do not require a background in library education; they bring to the academic library a feral set of values, outlooks, styles and expectations. Examples of feral job categories include information systems, human resources, fund raising, publishing, instructional technology, and facilities management.

• Tension or more accurately a divide has been identified between librarians and other non–librarian groups and the progressive “professionalization” of the traditional library support staff.

• Work once performed only by librarians is now performed by library support staff. In a recent American Library Association Support Staff Interests Round Table (ALA SSIRT) survey of 212 library support staff, 73% stated that they are now performing tasks previously performed by Masters of Library Science (MLS) librarians at their library, or have the same or similar duties as MLS librarians at other institutions.

• As technology has assumed increasing amounts of the routine work of the library, there has been a profound intellectualization and blurring of responsibilities across the academic library organization.

• A stated challenge is how can libraries implement change when the inertia of “legacy librarianship” is a nearly irresistible force.

**Recruitment and the MLIS Degree**

• The number of full-time, professional positions in libraries is dwindling, salaries continue to be depressed, more entry-level positions are being liquidated or “deprofessionalized,” and qualified job seekers are having trouble securing work.

• Lack of qualified applicants for available positions results in increasing the number of ads for extended or reopened searches

• Large research libraries are also hiring people with subject-specific Masters/Ph.D.'s for librarian positions. While the MLIS remains a valued and essential credential, it is also recognized that it may be necessary to more broadly consider alternatives for some types of library work. Some libraries have not required the MLIS for some years. There is a significant difference between acknowledging no need for the MLIS and no need for the MLIS for specific positions.
The Aging Library Workforce

- Demographics demonstrate the aging of the library population. Retirements will have enormous impact on ARL libraries. Approximately 16% of the national librarian population will reach age 65 between 2005-2009; more than 20% between 2010-2014; 18% between 2015-2019.
- The average age of library staff has increased and is now age 45-55.
- An estimated 40-68% of current academic librarians are reaching retirement age in the near 10-15 years. 16% forecasted to retire between 2000-2005; 27% forecasted to retire between 2010-2020 culminating in approximately 40% of ARL librarians retiring in 2005 and 67% by 2015.

Holistic and Hybrid Job Skills

- Most library staff will need applicable technical skills such as information systems and web services skills, no matter what functional areas they work in.
- Holistic job skills are also reflected in partnership among librarians and information technologists in collaborative teams, and in metadata application and digital projects.
- Hybrid professionals are both knowledge-based and systems-based experts.

LOCAL ISSUES AT BERKELEY

A. Outside the Library Organization

- Some members of the academic community believe that the library is no longer important. To maintain its relevance on the campus, the Library must demonstrate that it has strong expert professionals in subject and functional areas that can enrich academic programs.
- Faculty, students and campus administration want to see “cool stuff” in the Library’s services. This places a higher expectation on the Library to have strong hybrid experts to implement innovation and discovery for patrons.
- Faculty members in some academic disciplines continue to rely on traditional library services and its collections, while others believe in everything digital. For the former, “library as place” is just as important as ever; for the latter, library as an institution is no longer critical. This translates into the Library maintaining its traditional staff expertise and resources in selected areas, while re-directing its staff resources in other non-traditional, functional and multi-disciplinary areas.

B. Inside the Library Organization: Issues and Challenges

Demographics *

The median age of UCB Library workforce is age 50.4
- 50.9% of all staff are age 50 and over
- 66.0% of the workforce is in traditional roles (i.e. Librarian, Library Assistant)
- 34.0% of the workforce is in non-traditional roles (i.e. Information Technology, Administrative Services, Development, et al.)
The median age of the UCB librarian workforce is age 51.5
• 57.6% of the librarian staff are age 50 and over

The median age of the UCB Library Assistant (LA) workforce is age 47.9
• 46.7% of the LA staff are age 50 and over

The median age of the Information Technology (IT) workforce is age 46.7
• 40.0% of the IT staff are age 50 and over

The median age of UCB Library’s non-traditional Library workforce is age 50.4
• 51.7% of the non-traditional staff are age 50 and over

* See Appendix: Inside the Library Organization: Demographics

Hybrid Library Professional and Future Jobs
• A significant number if not all traditional jobs in the Library integrate technology transfer and information technology applications in the performance of assigned responsibilities.

Job Classification Infrastructure and Future Jobs
• Within the campus context of the Career Compass initiative, how will evolving and changing hybrid library professional positions be defined and integrated within the campus classification infrastructure?

Workforce Planning, Future Jobs and Budget
• Library Administration moves forward to prioritize possible New Directions Future Jobs initiatives aligned with strategic workforce planning within the parameters of FY budget constraints.

Change Management, Workplace Culture and Future Jobs
• The Library workplace culture must evolve and change into a cultural climate that encourages hiring of new, diverse talent, and supports development and mentoring of new talent in both professional and leadership roles, and trusts that the new paradigm will continue to sustain Berkeley’s world-class ranking as a research institution

Attracting New Talent to Our Future Jobs
• Continue to market attributes of the Berkeley campus, Berkeley experience and association with world-class faculty in the face of Bay Area’s cost-of-living, real estate costs, lack of campus housing, competitive salaries from private sector and private academic institutions, et al.
OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW DIRECTIONS

• Apply knowledge management and navigation across all academic disciplines, rather than limiting to narrowly-defined and task-based compartments.

• Utilize current and continuing workforce attrition and consolidation opportunities as opportunity to re-configure vacancies into New Direction positions and recruit holistic, diverse, and hybrid professional talent.

• Integrate IT expertise in distributed discovery processes and at front-end service points to support the instruction and research activities on campus.

• Leverage the concept of the hybrid or integrated Library professional embodying both knowledge-based and specialized systems-based acumen and skills. This concept is in-place in selected units of the Library, particularly where new technologies in the discipline or field have required a change of practice. Examples include: Bancroft Technical Services, Bioscience and Natural Resources Library, Instructional Services, Mark Twain Project, Media Resources Center, Northern Regional Library Facility (NRLF), Regional Oral History Office, Research and Collections and the Starr Library Media Center.

• Develop and support the expertise and expanding and evolving roles of librarians in instruction, research, publication and program development as aligned with the University’s core educational mission as a means of positioning the Library as integral to the campus’ academic strategies

• Advocate BILD (Berkeley Initiative for Leadership on Diversity), with a two-tier program to influence diversity in the UCB Libraries:
  o Staff Development Mentoring Initiative
  o Librarian Diversity Fellowship Program.

• Integrate jobs with the Library positioning itself as a laboratory for experimentation, collaboration and risk-taking. Examples include:
  o C.V. Starr East Asian Library working with their e-book vendor Superstar to provide metadata for the over 800,000 Chinese e-books licensed for mounting in Worldcat for access to full-text content
  o Technical Services working with MarcNow Innovative Solutions and the book vendor Harrassowitz to pilot shelf ready books for German titles supplied to UC Berkeley

• Utilize outsourcing and part-time recall appointments to gain efficiencies and effectiveness.

• Investigate new campus and UC-wide opportunities/initiatives for sharing/consolidating positions and/or work (i.e. UC Shared Cataloging Program).