



**Chapter Council Presents
Sharing Roundtables
MLA Annual Meeting
San Antonio, TX
Monday, May 16, 2005**

Table 23: Recruiting, Retention & Staff Development

Facilitator: Jill Sherman

Recorder: Judy Burnham

Additional Participants: Michael Fitts, Valerie Gordon, Kevin Messner, Melissa Nasec, Jean Shipman, M. J. Tooley, Cindy Williams

Recruitment

Participants stated that the following led them to health science librarianship – job available, location, health science background, wanted health science librarian position. Someone reported on a study that stated that librarians and journalists are alike – generalists, nosy, enjoy learning and technology oriented. The collegial respect of the profession is what attracted one participant to librarianship.

Once problem discussed is that there are too many librarians in some areas and not enough in others. Best advice to students is to be willing to relocate. M.J. Tooley, incoming MLA President has and will talk to library school students and/or Deans about medical librarianship. Another problem is that some library schools do not have a health sciences librarianship tract.

Discussion was held on the possibility that we are not attracting people at the right point – perhaps we should target undergraduate students rather than library science students. Health Career Fairs could be used to target middle school student. Health science librarians should offer to talk to library science students, high school students, at career fairs, etc. Sometimes involvement only takes volunteering.

VCU uses a mentoring program to “grow their own” librarians. Poster was presented on this program at the ‘05 MLA.

Some of the ideas used for recruitment:

- Tuition break for self or family
- Letters to possible candidates and those who may know someone
- Placement service at library schools
- Location
- Affordable cost of living
- Benefits

Some buzzwords to use during the recruitment process: flexible, telecommute, work at home, able to express creativity, newest technology, not dysfunctional, diversity, professional development, able to travel to meetings, participate in clinical procedures.

Retention

Some of the ideas used for retention and/or reasons expressed by the participants for staying in their job:

- Telecommuting
- Tenure – (some agreed while some disagreed)
- Benefits
- Family in location; family obligations
- Like job
- Climate
- Able to make a difference at their job
- Cross-training – reference/cataloging
- Move people into new positions to keep them interested

Staff Development

Participants from UAB discussed the Library Assistant Career Ladder at that institution that allows the paraprofessional to move up even if a higher position is not open -- if the paraprofessional is willing to take certain courses and demonstrate ability to work at a higher level and has the right attitude. This program is for individuals who are not interested in getting an MLS, but want to advance.

Another institution offered staff development in the library taught by the library faculty/staff on topics of interest. Another offered an Open Forum for issues that people want to discuss.

It was noted that there is an MLA DocKit on Staff Development.