

Summary of the 8 R's report
The future of Human Resources in Canadian libraries
August 5, 2005

The University of Alberta, with financial assistance from various library associations, governments, individual libraries and universities developed a comprehensive study on the state of human resources of the library profession in Canada. The 8 R's discussed in the report are: recruitment, retirement, retention, rejuvenation, repatriation, re-accreditation, remuneration and restructuring.

The primary concern was to have trained and experienced staff to succeed a senior librarian force scheduled to retire in large numbers over the next five to ten years. A parallel concern was the rejuvenation of mid-level staff that as a result of downsizing and flattening have not been prepared to take on the roles that will arise from the retirements. It took three years of effort to create this compressive report; 1000's of surveys were completed, as well as telephones interviews and focus groups. The report is available in full from the University of Alberta's website <http://www.ls.ualberta.ca/8rs/8RsFutureofHRLibraries.pdf> .

In terms of the professions record on equity, it was found that four out of five professional librarians and nine out of ten paraprofessionals are female. Visual minorities are not well represented only seven percent of the librarians and paraprofessionals are a visual minority.

One quarter of professional and paraprofessional library staff is over the age of 55, which is more than double (11%) of the national workforce. Also surprising, is that almost half of the librarians in Canada are over the age of 50 and thus are expected to retire in the next decade or so. If you assume an average retirement age of 60 years old, 25% will retire by 2009, and 48% by 2014. These numbers look a little less overwhelming if 62 years old is used for the age of retirement 16% by 2009 and 39% by 2014. Manitoba and Saskatchewan have the largest percentage of librarians over the age of 55 (44%) in the country (39%).

Manitoba and Saskatchewan are also identified as the two Provinces with the greatest difficulty in recruiting interested and qualified individuals. Major barriers identified for recruitment in Manitoba and Saskatchewan were geographic location (83% vs. 52% nationally), size of the libraries (74% vs. 59%), inadequate pool of interested candidates (71% vs. 50%), and inadequate pay (71% vs. 55%).

The report also suggests that Manitoba and Saskatchewan's recruitment opportunity is reduced because of a lack of a professional library school in either province.

Only 10% of the libraries in Canada have a secession plan, even though this study shows that the retirement rate will increase from the current rate of 11% over the last five years to 39% over the next five years.

The report identified the concern of recruiting professionals to rural and northern areas. Only 32 percent of the urban librarians would even consider a rural or northern library position. When asked to state why they would consider a rural library position 51% stated a more attractive lifestyle, 20% for experience sake, and 16% for better and more varied working conditions.

On average Librarians received a median income of \$60,000 a year, with non-management librarians at \$51,620, middle management and supervisors at \$60,000 and senior administrators at \$75,000. The Paraprofessionals have a median income of \$37,500 a year.

The Manitoba government is competitive with the national numbers for library technicians with Library Technician I (LY1) have a salary range of 32.8 – 37.7, and a Library Technician II (LY2) have a salary range of 37.2 – 42.5. Public Library Services branch has eight LY1 positions, and two LY2 positions. The Legislative library has one LY1 position and four LY2 positions.

With regards to professional librarians, the Manitoba Government is below the national median with Librarian wages ranging from 36.0 – 42.8 for LN1, 40.0 – 49.7 for LN2s, 44.5 to 54.5 for LN3s and 46.9 – 59.0 for LN4s. The Public Library Services branch has four LN3 positions, and the Legislative Library has five LN2, two LN3 and one LN4 position. Public Library Services has found difficulty in filling the professional positions, while the Legislative Library has not encountered the same recruitment problems. The Legislative Librarian and the director of Public Library Services are not included in the above positions.

In terms of satisfaction of pay by Manitoba and Saskatchewan librarians an interesting breakdown occurred. In terms of national satisfaction with remuneration, Manitoba and Saskatchewan were about the national average at 70 vs. 72 percent, however for senior administrators a large gap occurred from 53% satisfied vs. the national numbers at 78% satisfied. The financial data does support the argument in that the median senior administrator salary in Manitoba and Saskatchewan is \$69,500, and the national median at \$75,000. The Maritimes not Manitoba/Saskatchewan have the lowest senior administrator salaries in the country; however 68% consider their Maritime salary fair.

The study revealed that government librarians showed well on workload being manageable 47% vs. 39% for all library types, little job stress 29% vs. 24% and average work life balance at 63%. With regards to the paraprofessionals 49% found the workload manageable, 39% had little job stress, 78% felt their job allowed for good work life balance. Government librarians however did not wish to be in a management or leadership position when compared to the profession

as a whole. In terms of managing a service 37%, supervising others 28%, perform a leadership role 54%, motivate others 52%, and seek out new projects 68%. These are all below the national average and well below the public library sector where for example 52% wanted to manage a service or 44% wanted to supervise others.

There are a number of suggestions put forward in the report, the significant ones for Manitoba include:

Considering the bulk of retirements will likely be from 2009 -2014, institutions should develop a ten year succession plan. Institutions need to build strong lines of communication with senior staff to assist in plan for their retirement. (P.96)

“Grooming efforts for leadership/management should be taken place at all levels of the library organization, including new entrants.” (p.97)

“Collective agreements and internal policies, as well as internal organization and work structures, can impede or promote progression and professional growth. Institutions would be well advised to examine these structures.” (p.112)

Training is still a significant area for concern, as all types of librarians and paraprofessionals need ongoing training. An area of concern is leadership training; availability is very limited, yet leadership skills are a priority skill that is needed with the expected retirements. (p.112)

Library staff satisfaction is fairly high for both librarians and paraprofessionals. Stress levels appear to be increasing with workloads however, and senior administrators will need to watch this factor. The two primary contributors to job satisfaction for library staff are respect from their supervisors and the opportunity to grow and learn new skills. (p.166)

The next five years do not appear to differ greatly from the last five years re: retirement rates of library staff. The real crunch could happen 6 – 10 years ahead if progress is not made by the institutions and professions involved. There are currently 11,700 librarians in Canada, in ten years it is estimated that 4,560 will retire and only 3,250 new librarians entering. The study shows that the demand of library staff will increase over the next ten years, however this may not happen as a result of budget limitations and staff availability.

Another concern that Manitoba and Saskatchewan face is the distance to attend a professional library school. There is some limited availability of US based distance education programs, however these are very expensive and require long campus stays. The Canadian library schools currently do not offer internet based Master of Library Science programs, and this greatly limits paraprofessionals and library staff from pursuing further education.

In conclusion, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are seen by the library professionals as the least desirable provinces to be employed in. This combined with and the older age of our current librarians, the potential for a librarian shortage in Manitoba is greater.