[Making the Best of]
Hiring, Engaging, and Retaining Professionals in Paraprofessional Positions

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Quick Introduction

Kristen Heider  
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Digital Media Librarian

Hey girl. You know I’m not usually the jealous type... but, who is MARC?

Hey Girl,  
If I tell you I love you in a note, is it an item that is a manifestation of my expression of love for you? It’s all so confusing...

Hey girl, I know you didn’t get your MLS in order to fix printer jams and help people figure out the photocopy machines all day but girl, I appreciate that you help out with the little things.
Recent Paraprofessional Hires at SMU

July 2012
- 66 applicants (1 position)
- 12 with MLS (18%)
- 4 additional in progress

April 2013
- 103 applicants (2 positions)
- 14 with MLS (14%)
- 5 additional in progress

May 2014
- 89 applicants (1 position)
- 10 with MLS (11%)
- ≈ 6 additional in progress

Neither search committee gave preference to MLS grads or students
## Status of Jobs - Librarianship

### Job Openings - Methodology

- Manual data collection
  - ALA JobList
  - MLA Job Openings
  - I Need a Library Job (INALJ)
- Average postings per day, over 34 non-consecutive days
- US job openings
- Require MLS, or
- Professional titles without MLS requirement (Librarian, Library Director, etc.—but not School Librarian)

### Graduation Rate - Methodology

- Literature review
  - Library Journal (LJ)
  - Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
  - National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
  - Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE)
- US ALA-accredited universities only
## Status of Jobs - Librarianship

### Library School Output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recent graduates (2012 ALISE)</th>
<th>UNT</th>
<th>Current students (2012 ALISE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ψ</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>UNT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 1442</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>Total: 3220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(19% of 7549 reported)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(19% of 17018 reported)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Library Job Input

**12-Month Estimate** (ALA/MLA/INALJ)

- **Total:** 6570
- ALA-acc. MLS required: 97%
- Experience required: 79%
  - Professional: 22%
  - Not specified: 44%
  - Not prof: 13%

- **Total:** 1442
  - (19% of 7549 reported)
That’s almost 2500 graduates left out in the cold each year.
Projections

Professional

- 2010 = 156,100
- (2012 = 148,400)
- 2020 = 166,900
- 7% = 10,800
- (5% = -7,700)

Paraprofessional

- 2010 = 231,500
- (2012 = 216,600)
- 2020 = 253,600
- 10% = 22,100
- (6% = -14,900)
Step 1: Get required MLS

Step 2: Accrue 5-6 figure student loan debt

Step 3: Qualify for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program

   a. 10 years of payments
   b. on-schedule, on-time, in-full
   c. government or 501(c)(3) job
   d. full-time position

Step 4: Get stuck in the quagmire
Faced by the employees:

- Decreased professional benefits
- Expectations and evaluation
- Stagnation and limited future prospects

Faced by the institution:

- Retention
- Succession
- Justifying future positions
...Between Development Opportunities and the “Plight of the Adjuncts”

- Strategies we’ve tried
- Successes and failures
- Adjustments to make
Both with an MLS, both hired as paraprofessionals...

**Scenario 1: Kristen**
- Does work above job grade
- Given additional opportunities (professional-level practice, professional development support)
- Brought situation to the attention of The Powers That Be
- Loss of “privileges”

**Scenario 2: Sara**
- Does work above job grade
- Given additional opportunities (professional-level practice, professional development support)
- Brought situation to the attention of The Powers That Be
- Upgraded to Librarian
How You Can Help (for only $1.95 a day*)

- Advocate heavily for retaining professional jobs
- Advocate heavily for upgrading paraprofessional jobs
How You Can Help (for only $1.95 a day*)

- Consider hiring a certified librarian for paraprofessional jobs

- Provide internships, practicums, and volunteer opportunities

- Provide guidance to certified librarians in paraprofessional positions

*$1.95 is approximately the cost of a tall coffee at Starbucks
For great information on the skills you could be helping a paraprofessional MLS to build, check out Joe Clark’s article in the March 2013 issue of Notes.

Also check out the latest MLA Technical Report by Susannah Cleveland and Joe Clark for advice specific to music librarianship.

Information on graduation rates and enrollment rates were found on the websites of the universities listed, as well as the 2009 ALA Recruitment & Retirement Report and the Library Journal 2013 Placements and Salaries Survey.

Information on open positions was compiled from a review of August 2013, April 2014, October 2014, and January/February 2015 listings on the ALA JobLIST, MLA openings list, and the I Need A Library Job website.


All other information was compiled based on the experiences of the presenters and their colleagues at several institutions.
The End

Thank you.
(and please feed the kittens!)

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