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In a traditional hierarchical library, librarians often must leave the institution to move up the career ladder. The library loses an experienced librarian and must also invest a substantial amount of time and money to train a new employee. The author argues that libraries should attempt to retain experienced librarians by creating continuously challenging career paths with equivalent rewards. He proposes a new type of position—that of executive librarian—that would include increasingly individualized job content, a voice in institutional decision making, and optional administrative responsibilities.

Introduction

Most librarians are very happy with their jobs. However, a large number of academic law librarians with three to five years of experience consider moving to a new library. The reasons vary, but one common rationale is external circumstances, which includes a desire to live elsewhere, opportunities for a
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partner elsewhere, and layoffs. A second rationale is career advancement, which may be spurred by financial need, a desire for autonomy, a need for recognition of achievement, or a search for greater challenges.

Although a library cannot control those external circumstances that cause librarians to move, a library can attempt to retain experienced librarians by addressing their career advancement goals. To do this a library must create internal opportunities that meet the changing needs of its existing staff. These opportunities should address both librarians who seek promotions to positions with administrative duties and those who prefer to continue to hone their librarianship skills, in areas such as reference, circulation, or cataloging, without the addition of an administrative component.

This paper explores how libraries can create challenging internal career paths for their staffs. It begins by discussing why a library might want to retain its librarians for the long term, rather than requiring them to move up the ladder by leaving. It then explores why librarians may prefer to pursue career advancement goals by staying rather than moving. After concluding that there are benefits for both the library and the librarians in long-term employment, the article considers the major variables that correlate positively with long-term job satisfaction among academic and law librarians. Consideration of these variables leads to the proposal that libraries establish a new position that mixes substantive and administrative responsibilities. Finally, this paper addresses how the position would fit within a library’s professional staff structure, and the effect of these changes on the library director, the departmental support staff, the library’s other departments, and the library’s patrons.

Is Long-Term Employment Worth Considering?

Before discussing how libraries could change to encourage long-term employment, it is important to make sure there are reasons that libraries should work toward that result. Would such a relationship be beneficial for both the library and the librarians?

The Benefits and Drawbacks for Libraries

Before deciding how to retain librarians, one must decide that the possibility of long-term employment is desirable for the institution. Working on the assumption that the library’s goals parallel its patron’s goals, if retention of librarians benefits the library’s patrons, it will also benefit the library itself. There are several benefits to retaining employees for more than a few years. Experienced librarians have better institutional knowledge, better knowledge of the library’s resources, and closer relations with primary patrons. They provide consistency in areas of library operations that benefit from such performance, such as cataloging, and they are a proven quantity compared to a new hire. After working at an institution for a few years, the librarian is better
able to understand the library's mission, goals, structure, rules, and other systems.

For example, reference librarians who have worked in a library know which sources are readily available, unlike someone who is new to that particular collection. By working on longer-term projects for patrons, reference librarians become more aware of their patrons' needs, working styles, and interests, and are therefore better equipped to further the library's mission of serving patrons. But reference librarians are not the only ones who better serve the library as a result of long-term employment. Experienced catalogers understand the way things have been done in the past, leading to more consistent cataloging. Librarians in acquisitions, circulation, computer services, and serials may offer similar benefits to the library by virtue of remaining for an extended period of time. Finally, although it may be a double-edged sword, the librarian's coworkers and bosses know how that person works with the other librarians, unlike a new hire who has only been seen in an interview context.

There are also benefits for the library simply in not having to hire someone new. The process of hiring and training new librarians consumes staff time and money. In addition to the time taken up by the interview process itself, there is the considerable amount of staff time needed to train a new hire once the position is filled. Furthermore, there is an increased burden on remaining librarians during the period of short staffing while waiting for a position to fill. These staff may fall behind on important long-term projects because they are spending more time at the reference desk or cataloging standard works. They may also feel uneasy about the new librarian if they did not have significant input in the hiring process. Moreover, if there is not an available candidate who meets the library's needs, the position may remain vacant for an extended period of time, placing an even greater burden on the remaining librarians. The period of short staffing may also place indirect burdens on other departments of the library that cannot be predicted.

This is not to suggest that long-term employment is ideal for all libraries. There are also benefits to staff turnover. Without the input of librarians coming out of library school or from other libraries, a library may suffer from an absence of new ideas, and may become complacent and static. Without personal connections to other law libraries and law librarians, the library may also become insular, further hindering thought-provoking contact with other professionals. New hires often provide infectious enthusiasm, new skills, or innovative ideas that have been lacking up to that point. Libraries or departments that are stable must find other ways to generate such excitement, such as encouraging participation in continuing education, professional development activities, and networking. However, even libraries that create an environment promoting long-term employment, following the suggestion of this article, will still have librarians who leave after a few years for personal or professional reasons. Thus, on balance, it would seem that a library is best
served by planning ahead to encourage long-term employment while acknowledging the reality of short-term employment.

**The Benefits and Drawbacks for Librarians**

The benefits of long-term employment for the librarian can be both professional and personal. From a professional perspective, the librarian can gain greater familiarity with the collection, greater experience helping that institution's patrons, and greater familiarity with that library's mission, goals, practices, and procedures. All of these contribute to a professional satisfaction at working in an environment that one has helped create and nurture. On a personal level, staying at a single library eliminates the need—and the stress—of selling real estate, moving, and uprooting one's family. Although many of these personal benefits could also be met by staying in the same geographic area, that is not often possible.

As with libraries, however, along with reasons for staying, there are also important reasons for librarians to periodically change jobs. By going to another library, they will gain exposure to new materials, patrons, and procedures, all helping to make them better at their chosen profession. Fortunately, the proposals explored below have the advantage of facilitating long-term employment without discouraging or preventing short-term employment, thereby increasing the library's attractiveness to potential applicants.

This paper proceeds on the assumption that retaining librarians for more than three or four years is generally desirable for both the library and its librarians. To retain experienced librarians, the library should consider changing its career paths and organizational structure to better meet the goals of both the librarians and the library.

**Factors Contributing to Job Satisfaction among Librarians**

There are many ways to make librarywide changes to retain librarians. Instead of making changes based purely on common sense or anecdotal beliefs, the library should also consider the extensive periodical literature on what causes a librarian to stay in one position but leave another.

Employee retention is difficult to measure because employees leave positions for personal as well as professional reasons. Employees may also stay in positions for reasons unrelated to their desire to remain. In assessing reasons for turnover or the absence thereof, one must consider both the employee's "ability-to-leave" (the availability of other opportunities) and the employee's "willingness-to-leave" (the desirability of leaving the position). One of the earliest studies of librarians found that they did not feel constrained by the lack 5. *Id.* at 274.
of opportunity elsewhere, and hence had a high ability-to-leave score.6 The
same study found that, relative to those in other occupations, librarians had
higher willingness-to-leave scores, although this might be explained not by
widespread dissatisfaction with the profession, but by the fact that profession-
als generally are more willing to leave than other types of workers. Of
importance to us, the study continued by investigating the correlation between
job satisfaction and willingness-to-leave, finding “the higher the dissatisfac-
tion the higher the willingness-to-leave and vice versa.”7 Wabha concludes:
“The implication of this finding is that a reduction in the turnover rate of
librarians can be achieved by increasing their satisfaction level.”8

After determining that turnover can be decreased by increasing job satis-
faction, one must look at what specific factors contribute to job satisfaction for
librarians. Numerous studies have been conducted on job satisfaction among
librarians, ranging from the seminal 1970s librarian-specific job satisfaction
studies of Marchant9 and Wabha10 to the proliferation of narrowly focused
statistical analyses of the 1990s.11

One of the earliest empirical studies of job satisfaction among librarians
was conducted by Maurice P. Marchant.12 His study of academic librarians and

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6. Id.
7. Id. at 275.
8. Id. at 277.
10. Wabha, supra note 4.
 Librarians, 55 C. RES. LIBR. 541 (1994) (evaluating the correlation between age and career
 satisfaction, career entrapment, and career identity); Marjorie A. Benedict, Librarians’ Satisfac-
tion with Faculty Status, 32 C. RES. LIBR. 538 (1991); Bonnie Horenstein, Job Satisfaction of
Academic Librarians: An Examination of the Relationships between Satisfaction, Faculty Status,
and Participation, 54 C. RES. LIBR. 255 (1993); Mohammad H. Mirfakhrai, Correlates of Job
Satisfaction among Academic Librarians in the United States, J. LIBR. ADMIN., Vol. 14, No. 1,
1991, at 117 (primarily comparing job satisfaction factors for librarians in smaller vs. larger
libraries); Patricia M. Larsen, The Climate of Change: Library Organizational Structures,
services distinction is outdated); Arvid J. Bloom & Christina W. McCawley, Job Satisfaction in
the Library Profession: Results and Implications from a Pennsylvania Survey, 7 LIBR. ADMIN.
MGMT. 89 (1993) (finding that improved communication, decision making, and feedback practices
may hold the greatest hopes for increasing librarian's job satisfaction, if salary changes are
unavailable); Lois J. Buttlar & Rajinder Garcha, Organizational Structuring in Academic Librar-
ies, J. LIBR. ADMIN., Vol. 17, No. 3, 1992, at 1 (proposing structural changes to the public
and technical services division in larger library structures).
12. The doctoral thesis on which Marchant's book was based, supra note 9, was completed in 1970.
Maurice P. Marchant, The Effects of the Decision-Making Process and Related Organizational

The findings of the 1970 thesis were first reported in 1971. Maurice P. Marchant Participative
Management as Related to Personnel Development, 20 LIBR. TRENDS 48 (1971). For a discussion
of the roots of participative management techniques in academic libraries, see Louis Kaplan, On
the Road to Participative Management: The American Academic Library 1934–1970, 38 LIBRI
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faculty members at twenty-two institutions showed that participative management—management based on group decision making—increased the job satisfaction of the librarians. The positive link between participative management and increased job satisfaction for librarians was supported by a 1985 study at Brigham Young. Subsequent research suggests that the positive correlation between participative management and job satisfaction for librarians also exists if participative management is perceived to exist, even if it is illusory.

Soon after Marchant’s work was published, studies appeared that challenged the benefits of participative management in libraries. They did not reproduce his experiment with contrary results, but instead criticized his statistical methods and participative management in general. The primary critiques were of its time-consuming nature, the unreasonable expectations it offers, and the potential for friction following disagreements in meetings that would not otherwise have been held. Other commentaries questioned the general appropriateness of participative management for academic libraries.

It is clear from over twenty years of discussion that participatory management is not in and of itself a panacea. It is a management style that has both costs and benefits to the institution and the individuals involved. Furthermore, the costs and benefits will likely vary on a library-by-library basis, suggesting that it may be worthwhile in some libraries and not in others. Regardless of its

13. Marchant, supra note 9, at 5. The findings indicate that group decision making has two major advantages over decision making imposed unilaterally by management: the superior quality of the decisions and their greater acceptance by the group. While group decision making alone appears to be neither adequate nor necessary to assure high productivity, it has been found to be generally characteristic of high-production organizations.
15. Horenstein, supra note 11, at 264.
18. “Since service organizations are not designed primarily for employees, but rather for patrons or users, librarians need to make sure that participatory management at least does not hamper effective service.” Burckel, supra note 16, at 32. As this paper explores how to retain experienced librarians, it is reasonable to consider measures that improve job satisfaction, so long as they do not detract from the library’s mission and goals.
potential downside, studies have confirmed the link between perceived participatory management and job satisfaction.\textsuperscript{19}

Another early study of job satisfaction among academic librarians by Wahba assessed five areas that provide a way to objectively evaluate job satisfaction (work, supervision, salary, promotions, and coworkers) and compared the results to indexes derived from responses from other professions.\textsuperscript{20} The survey’s results suggested greater-than-average satisfaction with work, supervision, and coworkers, but found extensive dissatisfaction with pay and promotional opportunities.\textsuperscript{21} The Wahba study drew five conclusions from these facts:

- Job satisfaction (and therefore the reduction of turnover) of librarians should be considered an explicit goal of library management in addition to employee performance.\textsuperscript{22}
- The job satisfaction of librarians should be measured in every single library in order to determine the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of library staffs.\textsuperscript{23}
- It should be recognized that librarianship offers limited opportunities for promotion and advancement.\textsuperscript{24}
- There is a need for management training programs for all library administrators.\textsuperscript{25}
- There is a need for creative innovation, i.e., the work of librarians should be designed to allow for greater satisfaction with the job itself.\textsuperscript{26}

Although the Marchant and Wahba studies raised different issues, subsequent research\textsuperscript{27} has tried to evaluate the relative importance of management style, salary, promotional opportunities, and faculty status to academic librarians:

[The extent to which librarians felt they are consulted, involved, informed, and in control of their own activities were the best predictors of overall satisfaction. When

\textsuperscript{19} "[T]he data indicate that not only is a good supervisory climate satisfying in itself, but that it appears to be a necessary precondition for librarians to experience satisfaction with the characteristics related to mastery of the job itself." George P. D’Elia, \textit{The Determinants of Job Satisfaction among Beginning Librarians}, 49 LIBR. Q. 283, 300 (1979); see also Horenstein, \textit{supra} note 11, at 264-65. For a broader discussion of participative management in libraries, see Schanck, \textit{supra} note 17 or MARCHANT, \textit{supra} note 9.
\textsuperscript{20} Wahba, \textit{supra} note 4, at 271.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Id.} at 275.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Id.} at 277.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Id.}
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Id.}
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Id.}
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Id.} at 278.
combined, these items predicted satisfaction more than any other. Salary was the next best predictor, followed by possession of academic rank. 28

Another study compared job satisfaction between reference and cataloging librarians. Although the study found the two groups had equal job satisfaction levels, it concluded that cataloging positions were less able to meet the librarians' need for creativity, social service, and task variety. 29

To summarize, over twenty years of statistical surveys of academic librarians indicate that there are numerous issues that affect their job satisfaction levels. In many areas—including the nature of the work, coworkers, and supervision—librarians had high mean scores in the surveys, indicating that they were satisfied with those components of their job. 30 In some areas, however, including promotions and salary, librarians were well below the neutral point, indicating dissatisfaction with those factors. 31 Between salary and promotional opportunities, several studies found more extreme dissatisfaction with promotional opportunities than with salary. These studies, when combined with Marchant’s findings about the benefits of participative management, provide a roadmap for increasing job satisfaction in libraries.

Adapting Studies of Academic Librarians to Law Librarians

Although all of the studies discussed above surveyed academic librarians, there have not been any statistical analyses of job satisfaction factors for academic law librarians. Law librarians differ from the larger pool of academic librarians in several ways. The major differences are the librarians’ educational backgrounds, the higher salary structure, the small number of professionals in most law libraries, and a greater accountability of the library to the primary patrons.

In a market that increasingly demands dual-degree reference librarians, many of today’s law librarians have law degrees—and higher salary expectations—than their counterparts in other academic libraries. Their salary expectations may be attributable in small part to self-selection, but most are the result of the larger debts incurred in obtaining the law degree or the higher salaries their peers from law school are earning. The additional debt incurred in earning a law school degree may drive dual-degreed librarians to seek promotions even if they are not particularly interested in increased administrative responsibility

30. Mirfakhrai, supra note 11 at 127; Wahba, supra note 4, at 272.
31. Mirfakhrai, supra note 11 at 127; Wahba, supra note 4, at 275.
because of the large salary jumps between starting legal reference librarians, department heads, and directors.\textsuperscript{32}

The relatively small number of academic law libraries\textsuperscript{33} means that there are relatively few open positions at any one time. Consequently those that apply for promotions must be both qualified for the new position and geographically flexible. Those who are geographically limited may stay in a position that fails to meet their changing needs and goals because there are relatively few alternatives within a single geographic area outside the largest urban areas.

Finally, the independence of most law libraries from the rest of the university library system\textsuperscript{34} affects the nature of the service provided. Law librarians may be even more service-conscious than academic librarians because they are directly serving a small group of faculty who have total control over the library's future.

Furthermore, librarians who serve a relatively small core of primary patrons on a regular basis are likely to have a greater service orientation because they have a greater stake in the results. In an ongoing relationship, librarians gain several benefits, including regular substantive feedback, the chance to see the tangible fruits of their work in the form of faculty writings, student papers and cases won, and greater confidence that they understand their regular patrons' needs and goals. Although perhaps not a benefit, fear and a desire to improve one's performance in the context of an ongoing professional relationship may also lead to a greater service orientation. All of these benefits also accrue in ongoing professional relationships between librarians and law students.

Ongoing Job Design to Challenge Experienced Librarians

Before focusing entirely on how to deal with areas where job satisfaction is a problem, the library must determine how it will maintain satisfaction in the areas in which it typically exists. Supervisors must remember that the longer a librarian stays, the more the librarian's goals and needs may change, so new

\textsuperscript{32} Trends in compensation of academic law librarians between 1971 and 1991 suggest that the profession as a whole has not done well, whether salaries are measured against the cost of living or against groups such as law faculty members and beginning academic librarians. There has also been a large discrepancy between the rates of salary increase for directors and nondirectors in law school libraries. Christopher J. Hoeppner, \textit{Trends in Compensation of Academic Law Librarians, 1971–91}, 85 L. Libr. J. 185, 198 (1993). See also Malmquist, supra note 3, at 144–46.


\textsuperscript{34} By 1952, the American Association of Law Schools required member law libraries to have "sufficient autonomy" from the university libraries. \textit{ASS'N AM. L. SCH., PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1952 ANNUAL MEETING} 224 (1952). The American Bar Association adopted this standard in 1959. \textit{A.B.A. SEC. LEGAL EDUC. & ADMISSIONS TO THE BAR, 1959 REVIEW OF LEGAL EDUCATION} 21, standard 1(c) (1959).
issues may arise once librarians start to stay longer. Although librarians are generally happy with their work, supervision, and coworkers, one cannot take this for granted or the library will lose librarians by failing to address their changing needs over time.

Generalizations help to highlight broader issues and problems, but eventually job satisfaction must be dealt with on an individual level. For an employee to be satisfied at work, there must be guidance and autonomy, comfort and challenge, structure and room for innovation. For example, as an employee progresses in his or her reference career, some tasks, such as teaching legal research, conducting faculty research, or staffing the reference desk may become more desirable, while other responsibilities become less appealing. In that reference department, there may be one librarian who loves to teach and dislikes supervising others and another who is burnt out at the desk but loves administration. If the goal is to retain the librarians, then there is no reason to increase job dissatisfaction due to rigidity in task allocation. In allocating tasks, the process is critical. First the librarians should identify the department’s goals and the tasks necessary to achieve those goals. By including all the librarians in the allocation process, they will be able to express their preferences and more easily accept the less appealing parts of the job.

No approach to job redesign can be taken without first considering the overarching goals and limitations of the library, the law school, and even the university. In some cases, the optimal solution may not be immediately practical due to university bureaucracy. Incremental change, such as initiating a job audit, will get the process started and demonstrate commitment to the new plan. After the job audit, representatives of the library and the university can meet to decide how to implement the new career paths over time. These issues aside, keeping a job interesting over time is critical to keeping a librarian satisfied in his or her job.

**Job Enlargement**

Job enlargement consists of expanding the scope of a position without altering the individual’s role within the organization or increasing corresponding benefits such as salary or title. If librarians are underchallenged or have extensive amounts of free time, job enlargement may be appropriate as a way of increasing the challenge and responsibility of the position. For example, a reference librarian who works primarily at the reference desk may welcome the opportunity to lecture in a legal research class or prepare a set of handouts. Discrete projects of limited duration will give the librarian a sense of purpose and focus that can be lacking when he or she works exclusively at a single ongoing task.

35. Wahba, supra note 4, at 275; D'Elia, supra note 19, at 300–01; Mirfakhrai, supra note 11, at 127.
Job enlargement is often derided because it asks the employee to do more work for the same salary, also known as the "ratchet effect." While one cannot deny that job enlargement does not include a salary increase, it can motivate nonetheless because boredom or dissatisfaction can sap morale as much as stress and overextension. Furthermore, studies have shown that satisfaction is higher for less routine jobs.\(^{37}\)

Job enlargement can be done either on an individual or departmentwide basis. If individual positions are enriched, it may benefit the employees by addressing their personal needs, or it may destroy their relationship with their supervisor and coworkers by unbalancing the workload within the department. Those who wish to take on more should be able to do so unless it would conflict with the library’s goal of treating all librarians in the same position equitably.

**Job Rotation**

Job rotation\(^ {38}\) is often considered a way to give a new hire a sense of the different departments of the library. The new librarian may spend a week or month in each functional group to better understand the library’s systems.\(^ {39}\) It is less frequently used with more experienced employees on the assumption that it fails to help each employee build expertise in a specific area, but this rationale should be rethought. Although the librarians may wish to gain more specialized knowledge, job rotation may actually be better training for librarians because they can then effectively cover for one another in cases where one librarian is out or leaves the library. Furthermore, experienced librarians will better understand how the work of the other units affects their own work because they have a better understanding of their own jobs.

Job rotation offers a valuable lesson that can be applied within a department as task rotation. For example, within a reference department, collection development responsibilities, areas of student supervision, and library committees are three areas where rotation can keep a position fresh over time. For each task or group of tasks, the rotation period is also critical. Switching tasks monthly would likely be demoralizing, while changing every five years would not be particularly satisfying because each librarian would have his or her task for so long. Rotating on a semester or annual basis may be ideal depending on the tasks being rotated.

Within task rotation, there are really two levels. First, one can rotate equal tasks within an area, such as writing an environmental law handout one year

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38. For a non-library-specific discussion of job rotation, see Michael A. Campion et al., *Career-Related Antecedents and Outcomes of Job Rotation*, 37 ACAD. MGMT. J. 1518 (1994) (concluding that job rotation was more effective for employees in early career than those performing well already).

Retaining Experienced Librarians and writing a labor law handout the next. One can also rotate fundamentally different tasks, such as writing an environmental handout one year and collecting international documents the next. If a department has three librarians, each of whom teaches a legal research class session, rotating lecture topics keeps the subject matter fresh, but does not address the needs of the librarian who either loves or hates teaching. There is a more significant level of task rotation if the librarians agree that each semester one person will teach all three sessions and the other two will pick up the slack at the reference desk, because now not every librarian is doing each task anymore. There will also be tasks that no one wants to do, and these will have to be distributed or rotated as well. Tasks could be redistributed by listing the goals on a sheet and having each librarian select a task in order until they are gone or by assignment from the director or department head. The former adheres more closely to the goals of participative management, but the latter may be necessary if the director or department head prefers to control the process.

One of the major benefits of task rotation for more experienced librarians is that the library will not be incapacitated if one librarian is out or leaves. The concern is that if one librarian leaves, the library would have to find a new one who could step in and assume the tasks that were the exclusive speciality of his or her predecessor. Thus, if the librarians are all doing different tasks, it might be harder to replace individuals who leave if their assigned tasks were specially tailored to them. Although it may be relatively easy to replace a foreign and international law librarian, it is likely to be much more difficult to replace one who also does acquisitions, teaches international legal research, and manages the local area network.

Task rotation may also create initial problems if the task distribution is unbalanced or if there is insufficient documentation for the librarians to learn the position within a reasonable period. This can be remedied immediately or after the first rotation depending on the magnitude of the problem. The first rotation will necessarily be the most difficult because there will not be a written set of procedures in place.

Another significant benefit of task rotation is that no individual can hoard all the information about a specific niche because that individual’s area of responsibility changes periodically. One of the critical aspects of successful task rotation is documenting the position’s procedures, systems, and goals. That way, instead of reinventing the wheel, the new person in that position can get up and running faster while still being able to change the decisions made by the previous librarian in that position. In an environment where tasks are rotated, knowledge that is only in the librarian’s head is worthless because others cannot refer to it when that person leaves or changes tasks.

In deciding what type of task rotation is appropriate, the library must assess the personnel involved, their experience levels, their task preferences, and the library’s willingness to cater to those preferences. The major drawback of task
rotation is that while new librarians should be exposed to as many different
tasks as possible, more experienced librarians should have the flexibility to
focus on things they enjoy doing and to develop expertise in those areas.

Job Enrichment

Making a job more satisfying by increasing the employee’s autonomy is known
as “job enrichment.” There are many different ways a job can be enriched,
so one must carefully consider both the process and the desired result. For
example, adding responsibility for student supervision would be job enlarge-
ment if the librarian still had to continue with everything else he or she was
doing. The same change might be considered job enrichment if the librarian
were given autonomous control over hiring, student training, and procedures,
and could give up some other tasks.41

Job enrichment cannot be considered without the existence of several basic
elements. Employees must have the requisite knowledge and skills, strong
growth needs, satisfaction with general work conditions, and institutional
support for the change. Without the ability to rely on others to do their best,
job enrichment is doomed because it requires everyone to be willing to give
up a level of comfort and control to permit others to do their jobs.

To enrich a job, superiors must give up some control over the specific
methods of implementation. Supervisors should be consulted prior to major
changes to ensure that those changes do not conflict with the library’s mission
and goals. After each new project has gained momentum, the supervisor should
not oversee the project so closely that the librarian lacks any decision-making
role. At the same time, this autonomy also means an increased responsibility
to keep colleagues informed when considering a policy change that would
affect their areas of responsibility. For example, a librarian in charge of signs
and handouts could design a new instructional handout for a CD-ROM data-
base independently, but to do the job well he or she should consult with the
computing-services librarian, the librarian who will be training students on the
workstation, and the reference librarians who have already been fielding
questions about the product. Hence, autonomy gives the capacity to make
decisions with the concomitant duty to consult others before making them
rashly or irresponsibly.

The best way to evaluate job enrichment is to ask whether the change in

40. Id. at 390–93. Terms are not used consistently in this field, so one author’s “job enlargement” is
another author’s “job enrichment.” Furthermore, two authors may use the same term to mean
different things. The use of terms in this article is based on Schanck’s article.
41. For a discussion of job enrichment for catalogers, see Marsha Starr Paiste & June Mullins, Job
question improves each employee's job satisfaction while furthering the library's goals. What may be viewed as desirable job enrichment by one employee may not be seen in the same light by another.\(^43\) Work redesign, sometimes equated with job enrichment, is a broader concept that defines jobs by the scope of what the employee should be able to achieve rather than by defining specific tasks to be completed.\(^44\) By giving the librarian control of a project, the director and department head are showing faith in the librarian while providing valuable job experience for future positions of responsibility.

Job enrichment need not be done on an individual basis. Entire departments can have responsibility for dividing the departmental tasks, setting group working hours within certain parameters, or creating a committee to study a specific problem.\(^45\) Even permitting each person to select his or her own new project would offer a level of autonomy relative to assigning the employee a preselected task.\(^46\) Autonomy has been shown to positively affect job satisfaction\(^47\) while making the employee more invested in those projects over which he or she has control.

### Problems with Job Enrichment

Job enrichment has been criticized for taking too narrow an approach to job satisfaction.\(^48\) Although it addresses each individual job, it does not consider the organization's fundamental structure or new interrelationships within the hierarchy due to staff turnover, work flow shifts, and technological changes.\(^49\)

Beyond both individualized job enrichment\(^50\) and departmental restructuring is librarywide change. Although beyond the scope of this paper, librarywide change has far broader ramifications than anything so far discussed because it addresses the role of the library in the larger institution, such as the law school or law firm. Furthermore, it also encompasses both professional and paraprofessional staffing issues. Librarywide change is easier said than done because such drastic changes in staffing, work flow,
and institutional orientation will cause substantial stress to the existing staff and its patrons.51

The Process of Job Enrichment

If job enrichment is appropriate for the organization, the next step is to decide how to achieve it with a minimum amount of institutional and personal stress.52 Here are six guidelines to consider when planning to enrich the positions in a department:

1. Reduce routine and repetitive tasks that tend to be avoided by staff. A reduction in the dysfunctional behavior of avoidance should improve satisfaction and performance.

2. Restructure jobs into meaningful units. This may uncover and reduce unnecessary supervision or coordination imposed when work was broken down into "efficient" units. Higher quality work and output may also result.

3. Rethink work flow and structure. New methods may be discovered for performing the work more efficiently.

4. Let staff participate in the process of redesigning their jobs. Because they will expect their new jobs to be better than the old ones, their performance may improve.

5. Take steps to improve job clarity and reduce role ambiguity. Even highly motivated and able staff will perform less effectively and be less satisfied if they are unclear as to what they are supposed to do exactly. If there is role conflict—where two or more individuals place conflicting expectations on the staff member—the resulting confusion will likely preclude successful job performance.

6. Take care to infuse work and interactions with dignity and a sense of professionalism.53

Regardless of the changes in the positions, feedback is critical. In addition

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Dragich discusses different academic law library organizational structures, their benefits, and their implications. Dragich's "Individual Function Based Organizational Model" comes closest to the proposals for career path restructuring discussed in the following sections. Dragich uses this approach as one of the intermediate steps on the way to a more radical work group based model. Id.

It is possible that the career path changes discussed in the following sections may lead to a broader analysis of library structures, but such changes do not require wholesale changes on the order of those discussed in the Dragich article.


to formal performance reviews on an annual or semiannual basis, feedback should be constant or at least monthly at the start so that any problems can be uncovered and solved before they are taken for granted or lead to more fundamental problems. The more frequent the feedback, the more helpful it is because the employee can work on specific issues, rather than an annual avalanche. Also, frequent constructive feedback makes the employee feel more valuable because it increases involvement and personal investment in the process regardless of the issues raised. This feedback could initially be written or oral, one-on-one or in a group, but any conclusions should be discussed as a group so that nothing is hidden that could later hurt the group dynamic.

New Positions Facilitate Internal Professional Advancement

The opportunity for enriching jobs while accounting for each librarian's changing needs over time is best addressed by complementing satisfying jobs with flexible structures that permit the individual to continue to progress and grow in salary, title, responsibility, and autonomy. Without external recognition of improved skills and abilities, a librarian may continue to do more and perhaps do it better, but may become dissatisfied with his or her job regardless of the challenge it provides. External rewards, including salary increases, job title improvements, faculty status, increased involvement in library affairs, and voluntary recognition of a job well done by superiors, are important in maintaining a high level of job satisfaction.

Career paths within a library system should be clearly identified and made apparent to staff. As staff express interest in moving along these paths, managers should be alert to opportunities to provide assistance and counseling. An organization that offers staff a reasonable hope for advancement and self-improvement will likely benefit from greater staff commitment.

The Executive Librarian

Although at some point the employee may need to change institutions to continue to advance professionally or the employer may decide that the employee has plateaued, the job enrichment approach, when combined with a flexible career path structure, can minimize the need to change institutions to meet professional goals.

A new library position called “executive librarian” should be created to achieve these goals. The executive librarian position is for experienced librarians who are interested in both administration and their chosen area of library

54. See Martha J. Dragich, Performance Appraisal, in LAW LIBRARY STAFF ORGANIZATION, supra note 17, at 185.
55. See generally supra text accompanying notes 5–31.
56. Siggins, supra note 53, at 313.
work, such as reference, circulation, or cataloging. Because of the institutional knowledge required to deal effectively with administrative issues, this would not be an entry-level position. However, the availability of the executive librarian position within a library may help in recruiting entry-level librarians.

The executive librarian position is designed to keep the job interesting while offering opportunities for the librarian’s professional growth. It addresses the major sources of librarian job dissatisfaction—promotional opportunities and salary—while maintaining the high satisfaction level that librarians already have about their work, coworkers, and supervision. In addition to acknowledging the specific results of past job satisfaction surveys, the executive librarian model also incorporates elements of participative management. Participative management increases job satisfaction and may also improve the perception by executive librarians of their promotional opportunities since the increased decision-making opportunities they receive should make them more desirable as candidates for director and associate director vacancies. In choosing the administrative path, the executive librarian gains a role in management by taking on administrative duties and participating more directly in the decision-making process of the library.

This is not an entry-level position. Librarians should have at least three or four years of experience before being promoted to executive librarian. The salary and job title should reflect both the skills and the role of the executive librarian within the library. The flattening of the library’s structure may also help it fund the higher-salaried executive librarian positions. Finally, because the title expresses the administrative experience of the position, it will permit those with the title to be considered for future promotions to associate director and director. Even if salary increases are not immediately available, the title, increased participation in management, and new challenges should make the position of executive librarian desirable to those with an interest in administration.

The tasks taken on by the executive librarians will vary depending on the library’s goals, the director’s management style, and the department’s duties. For example, if the reference librarians primarily staff the desk, prepare handouts, and teach legal research sessions, executive librarians might schedule bibliographic instruction sessions, help the director determine the department’s budgetary and space needs, develop and assign long-term projects, and allocate faculty research to the librarians, senior librarians, and other executive librarians.

One of the most discussed personnel issues in academic libraries is faculty status. Although law library directors often have faculty status, other law

58. See Michael J. Slinger, The Career Paths and Education of Current Academic Law Library Directors, 80 L. LIBR. J. 217, 227 (1988) (found that 92 percent of directors held academic rank on their law faculty); Malmquist, supra note 3, at 149 (90.6 percent of directors had faculty status in a smaller, but more recent study).
librarians ordinarily do not. Building faculty status into the executive librarian position would provide a significant psychological boost to the position. The drawback of faculty status is that the librarians may be required to teach and publish to an extent that conflicts with the library's goals or that is personally burdensome. Holding faculty status or at least serving on law school committees would help better integrate the goals of the library and law school by improving the frequency and depth of communication between the two.

The executive librarian is not just a name change for the position of department head. Unlike department heads, there can be more than one executive librarian in a department. They can divide and rotate administrative duties to keep the job more interesting while continuing in their reference or cataloging duties. Depending on the institution, the executive librarians may be roughly equal to the other librarians or may explicitly supervise them. This paper advocates a flatter library structure, with a director, executive librarians, and other librarians composing three professional tiers. However, in a library with a head of public services, that position could be replaced or supplemented with "senior executive librarians" who take on the same duties as the head of public services. To the extent that associate directors and directors are often exclusively administrative positions, it may be preferable to have a single decision maker in those positions.

Among the numerous factors to consider when determining whether librarians are ready to become executive librarians are whether they have:

- sufficient experience to understand the librarywide issues that they will face;
- skills and self-motivation to contribute without extensive supervision;
- interest in the library as a whole, including its welfare, mission, and goals;
- the ability to work with others, respecting them and their work product; and
- a willingness to share information and ideas constructively to avoid building a fiefdom to the detriment of the library.

Once the executive librarians divide the different tasks, they may have different daily schedules, time commitments, and equipment needs. These will require the institution to be flexible in helping the executive librarians in achieving their goals.

Finally, it may be difficult to evaluate each executive librarian on the tasks that the group is sharing. Feedback is critical in any position and the director

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59. In 1991, only 24 percent of nondirector law librarians had some type of faculty status. Malmquist, supra note 3, at 149.
60. Horenstein, supra note 11, at 262–63.
must remain alert for tensions due to feelings that the workload is being carried unequally.

**The Senior Librarian**

The executive librarian position is not appropriate for all librarians. For librarians who are unsuited for or uninterested in administration, there should always be the option of becoming a senior librarian who continues to focus on his or her chosen area, such as reference, circulation, or cataloging, but at a more advanced level. It is essential to create an alternate career path to the executive librarian position for those uninterested in administration. Although the senior librarian position may not have the same advancement opportunities, the library or the librarian may decide that it is preferable to becoming an executive librarian. The promotion from librarian to executive or senior librarian should be made around the third or fourth year, which is about the time librarians typically consider changing jobs.

The senior librarian can be differentiated from the entry-level librarian by title, salary, and greater control over the projects undertaken. For example, a senior reference librarian may concentrate more on writing handouts and cut back on reference desk hours. The department head and/or executive librarians would then decide how to reallocate those tasks among the other department members. Ideally all librarians should have a voice in the allocation process. The benefit to the employee of becoming a senior librarian is that there is more control over how the day is spent. This new task flexibility would increase job satisfaction, giving senior librarians an incentive to stay in their positions even if they do not have an interest in future administrative experience. The benefit to the library is that the experienced librarian stays and is likely to do a better job than if the librarian was doing things he or she liked less. The notable drawback to this situation is that if a senior librarian leaves, it may be difficult to fill that position with someone who has the same likes and dislikes.

**The Problem of Titles**

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the positions of five librarians with the same title at different institutions will vary widely regarding job responsibilities, autonomy, and supervision. This creates problems when applying for positions outside the institution because the interviewer may place more weight on the job title than on the tasks undertaken while in the position. Each institution has its own titles, grades, and levels, and short of an impractical ABA/AALL or federal regulation, the problem of titles meaning different things at different libraries will continue to exist.

Unlike trends that come and go, the flexible internal career path responds

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to the need for internal promotional opportunities lacking in pyramidal organizational structures.

**The Executive Librarian in the Library’s Structure**

The diagrams in the following figures offer snapshots of possible departmental job structures. They are discussed in more detail in the following sections. In each figure, the top row of directors represents the purely administrative positions including associate directors and directors; the middle row represents positions that are partly administrative and partly library operations (e.g., reference, circulation, or cataloging positions), and include depart-

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**Figure 1. Pyramid structure.**

```
  Director
   /\  
  /   \ 
Department Head
  |     |
Entry-Level Librarian Entry-Level Librarian Senior Librarian Senior Librarian
```

**Figure 2. Diamond structure with a department head.**

```
  Director
   /\  
  /   \ 
Executive Librarian Department Head Executive Librarian
  |     |
Entry-Level Librarian Senior Librarian
```

**Figure 3. Diamond structure without a department head.**

```
  Director
   /\  
  /   \ 
Executive Librarian Executive Librarian Executive Librarian
  |     |
Entry-Level Librarian Senior Librarian
```

**Figure 4. Diamond structure without entry-level or senior librarians.**

```
  Director
   /\  
  /   \ 
Executive Librarian Executive Librarian Executive Librarian Executive Librarian Executive Librarian
```
cation. Everyone on the same level communicates with everyone else, but if there is a head, then the head may or may not be the only person in direct contact with the director. The bottom row represents the purely substantive “front line” positions, including both entry-level and senior librarians. This group may be managed by the department head or a single executive librarian or the group of executive librarians depending on the library’s personnel, management style, and division of labor.

These structures are not intended to form a linear sequence, but instead a menu to help the director assess which structure would best further the library’s mission and goals based on the available personnel. Any structure could be a goal or an intermediate step between the existing structure and the ideal for that library. Some of the most important factors to consider in selecting which model to use are:

- each employee’s experience;
- each employee’s interest in administrative responsibility;
- each employee’s current job title and salary;
- the library’s interest in retaining employees over time;
- the director’s willingness to delegate responsibility;
- the library’s flexibility to adjust salaries;
- the library’s willingness to invest in ongoing staff education;
- the library’s mission and goals; and
- the library’s parent institution’s mission and goals.

After deciding which structures are possible, the library can move on to deciding which structure is preferable to meet the library’s mission and goals including professional retention. Before changing to a new structure, it is vital to understand the benefits and drawbacks of the predominant existing organizational structure, the pyramid.

The Pyramid Structure

The pyramid (figure 1) is the traditional departmental structure in which all of the librarians report to a department head, who in turn reports to the department head’s supervisor. There are no executive librarians in the traditional structure.

This structure has numerous benefits, both obvious and subtle. It is an ideal structure for training new librarians and for supervising senior librarians who are not interested in administrative responsibility. Furthermore, all information goes up the hierarchy through a single conduit, minimizing the time the director must spend making department-specific decisions. This organizational structure is optimal for libraries that are expanding either staff or collections because the narrowly defined hierarchy permits a high level of supervision.63

63. Dragich, supra note 51, at 72–73.
Once an institution is faced with the threat of staff turnover or decreasing resources, the benefits of other structures can be evaluated.

There are also drawbacks to a pyramidal structure, including the difficulty of promoting innovation in a bureaucracy, an inability to learn administrative skills without open positions at a higher level, and the inability to take advantage of each librarian's different strengths due to the need to treat all librarians of the same level equally. Other studies have labeled the drawbacks of a hierarchical structure as goal displacement, conservatism, limited communication, dehumanization, lower job satisfaction, and greater internal conflict. One recent study identified four distinct problems with organizations that have numerous levels of hierarchy:

1. Decision making: the library is often unable to react quickly and flexibly enough to satisfy patrons' changing needs (because there are too many levels to go through);
2. Communication: the more intermediaries, the more confusing (and, arguably, the more interpretative) becomes the information disseminated from the director down and vice versa;
3. Morale: the distance between the decision makers and those who must act keeps effective participation of the actors excluded from the decision-making process at bay;
4. Creativity: ideas and suggestions lose their freshness and enthusiasm both on the way up the hierarchical structure and on the way back down again.

Some of the drawbacks of the pyramidal structure can be minimized by adopting a flatter library structure, meaning fewer levels of hierarchy. Although in some cases, due to existing personnel or institutional needs, this flattening may not be possible, as librarians leave, the library should consider whether the vacated position is necessary or whether the salary could better be employed by flattening the structure and increasing compensation to the existing professionals.

Although the pyramid structure has clear benefits, there are other structures that may better meet the library's long-term goals. Some alternatives to the pyramid include an upside-down pyramid with many high-level decision-makers and few entry-level workers, a nonhierarchical work group in which decisions are made by mutual agreement, or a diamond, a hierarchical structure in which most of the librarians are doing both substantive and administrative work. The upside-down pyramid would not meet the library's goals because there is so much substantive work to be done. The purely nonhierarchical structure has distinct benefits, but suffers from the fact that no one person is

64. Id. at 74 (citing various studies).
accountable to the law school dean or managing partner. The diamond is an ideal structure for libraries because it offers experienced librarians the opportunity to take on new administrative challenges while continuing to enjoy the substantive aspects of librarianship.

**The Diamond Structure**

If the library’s goal is to offer satisfying long-term employment to professional librarians, the traditional pyramidal structure becomes an impediment because librarians cannot gain administrative experience unless the head leaves. In the diamond structure (figures 2-4), so called because the middle can be wider than the top or bottom, librarians can progress to the executive librarian positions. This type of structure provides greater internal promotional opportunities and higher ongoing job satisfaction for those employees who progress internally. The diamond structure accounts for individual needs by permitting those with experience to decide whether they would prefer the executive or senior librarian path, rather than limiting their progress to only open positions.

The concept of the diamond structure did not originate in libraries. Its most common use is to describe employment models in a service economy. The diamond form has fewer pure administrators and fewer support staff members because the most efficient organization relies on automation for routine administrative and clerical tasks. This permits the majority of its members to work directly with the public.66

The “diamond” organizational structure has also been advocated in law firms:

The future, [Fred Bartlit, Jr.] declares, belongs to smaller firms shaped like a diamond—with a relative handful of young associates at the bottom, who are being trained rather than exploited, a small group of senior partners at the top and a large group of experienced lawyers in the center who will utilize the latest technology to perform for themselves much of the work that used to be fobbed off on associates, paralegals, and even secretaries.67

The diamond is possible in libraries because the organization may not need the rigid hierarchical structure to perform optimally. In addition to greater responsibility, executive librarians would get higher salaries and job titles that reflect their new responsibilities. If an employee is well-compensated and feels

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valued, the employee is likely to be more effective than if he or she is
dissatisfied. Higher salaries could be funded either through job reclassifica-
tion, the redistribution of a departing supervisor’s salary, or incremental
increases over time.

The critical aspect of the diamond structure is that those who want admin-
istrative responsibility will not feel held back the way they might in a pyrami-
dal structure. It is accepted that job satisfaction declines if employees are not
challenged and their skills are not used. Librarians who wish to take on
greater nonmanagerial responsibilities can take the senior librarian route that
offers long-term job satisfaction without a fundamental change in responsibili-
ties.

For new librarians, the diamond structure offers the possibility of great
career progress and flexibility without concerns about job openings, moving,
new employment situations, and similar considerations. Furthermore, the new
librarian is likely to be better trained because the employer does not expect to
have to fill the same position again every three to four years. Of course, job
changes are inevitable, but at least they will occur for personal reasons, not
because the employee was unable to flourish within the library structure.

An added benefit of this structure is that the department head and/or
executive librarians can rotate supervisory tasks among themselves on an
annual basis. This would make each of their jobs more stimulating but avoid
placing the burden of having to do it all on any one person. This sharing of
administrative responsibility means each librarian will have more time to
continue to do his or her substantive library work.

The drawbacks of the diamond structure should not be overlooked—they
are also significant. There is the possibility that with the added responsibility
will be accompanied only by a nominal salary increase, and that the added
administrative headaches will more than outweigh the benefits of the more
flexible position. Although this issue is mitigated somewhat by providing the
less “onerous” option of senior librarian status, there may be pressures to take
on more responsibility regardless of the position’s title or salary.

Some movement between institutions is inevitable, and replacing an ex-
ecutive librarian may be more difficult for the library than replacing a “stand-
ard” librarian. The problem is that the position is no longer that of a narrowly
defined department head, but is instead a supervisor who must work as a team
member with the other executive librarians and/or the department head as well
as the director. Moreover, although librarians in a diamond structure may

68. The link between job satisfaction and job effectiveness is tenuous, Burckel, supra note 16, at 32;
however, it is clear that job dissatisfaction is not positively correlated with job effectiveness,
Siggins, supra note 53, at 307–09.

69. David W. Lewis, An Organizational Paradigm for Effective Academic Libraries, 47 C. RES. LIBR.
337, 348 (1986).
appreciate the opportunity to be promoted internally, this structure may make it harder to hire appropriately experienced senior librarians from other libraries. The difficulty is that it will take new hires longer to become used to the new institution, placing a greater burden on the remaining staff during the startup period.

Another challenge of the diamond structure from the administrative perspective is the difficulty of deciding when a librarian is ready to become an executive or senior librarian. In some cases, a librarian may never be appropriate for executive librarian status, placing stress on the librarian and the institution throughout his or her employment. There are some librarians who would not be good administrators, and it may be difficult for the librarians and the decision makers to face this fact after committing to a less hierarchical structure.

One major problem with the diamond is the issue of salary changes as people change positions. In law firms, each new partner reduces the old partners’ share of the profits because there are more people taking from the same pool. In the library environment, salaries should not fluctuate so that executive librarians have no incentive to close ranks behind them.

Another problem with executive librarian salaries is that a department head does more administration than would three executive librarians dividing the tasks. This means that if administration is valued more highly than reference work or cataloging, for instance, then the head may deserve a higher salary than the executive librarians. The argument in favor of giving department heads and executive librarians equal salaries is that the single head does not necessarily have more responsibility than the three executive librarians because they are as responsible for the department’s work as the department head and hence should earn the same salary. If salaries are perceived to be inequitable or arbitrary, that will injure the collegiality of the library.

There is no single way to convert a pyramidal organization to a diamond organization. The most basic component is retaining experienced librarians and distributing the administrative responsibilities to those who are interested so that more librarians are gaining both substantive and administrative experience. In the process of moving to a diamond, a major decision is whether or not to have a department head or head executive librarian. In cases where the library does not want to lose its existing head of reference or head of public services, a shift away from the department head structure could be interpreted as a demotion, causing that librarian to leave prematurely. In such cases, the head position should be retained both to ease the transition and to retain the employee. However, in cases where circumstances permit the flattening of the organizational structure, the department head could be made equal to the other executive librarians. In a department without entry-level or senior librarians, everyone in the department could be an executive librarian. The following three sections describe these scenarios in greater detail.
Retaining Experienced Librarians

Diamond Structure with a Department Head

In a diamond structure with a department head (figure 2), the department head can create and implement procedures and systems without consulting the other librarians in the department. This is beneficial because it avoids the time-consuming management-by-committee, but it is detrimental because librarians feel uninvolved in decision-making and the procedures may not be as effective as they could be. The head is responsible for communication between the department and the director, minimizing misunderstandings and misinterpretations while still providing a conduit for departmental concerns. The drawback of retaining the head is that the hierarchy is not really flattened because there is still differentiation between the department head and the executive librarians. Even though the executives are roughly parallel to the head, they may or may not be able to work together as equals. This will vary with the specific personnel involved and may not be predictable in advance.

If the executive librarians are not involved in decision making and report to the department head, the entire plan has failed because another level of hierarchy has been added and the executive librarians will not get the administrative experience they need to be promoted to an associate director or director position elsewhere. Furthermore, tension may arise if the executives and the head do the same work, but the head has a higher salary and title or status.

Unless the department head has departed, it may be advantageous to retain the department head to avoid the awkward appearance of a demotion to executive librarian. Such a move could cost the library a valuable employee at precisely the time he or she is needed most.

Diamond Structure without a Department Head

The primary benefit of not having a department head (figure 3) is that conscientious executive librarians can work together and gain managerial experience without giving up the work that drew them into the profession. Instead of a single individual bearing the burden of administration, it is evenly distributed among all the executive librarians, increasing their level of responsibility. This is the most difficult arrangement and can only be achieved with the right staff at the right time.

If the library prefers centralized communication between the director and the executive librarians and/or between the executive librarians and the entry-level librarians and senior librarians, this can be achieved without a head. The executive librarians could create rotating or permanent tasks that could be liaison to the director and liaison to the professionals. A third executive librarian could be the liaison to the student workers in the department if that task was not delegated to one of the librarians or senior librarians.

The drawbacks of this structure are that no single person can be held
accountable for problems or communication difficulties. In cases of extreme disagreement, the director may have to help the executive librarians come to a final conclusion.

Diamond Structure without Entry-Level or Senior Librarians

One possible variation of the department without a head is a department with no entry-level or senior librarians (figure 4). In that case everyone will have direct contact with the director and share administrative and reference or cataloging duties. Since some administrative and substantive tasks are less palatable than others, the group could opt for a rotation system. This would permit them to mix desirable and undesirable tasks for each person. Then, after a finite period, such as a year or two, the tasks could all be redistributed. In the case where all the department’s librarians are executive librarians, administrative meetings may take up more time, especially at the start, because more people are involved in the decision-making process.

The Process for Change

The process by which change is introduced is critical to the success of the restructuring. By giving more librarians administrative responsibilities, the director is showing faith that they can work together effectively. The director must also give the department the tools needed to do the jobs assigned to it. If the department head leaves and the director adds the administrative responsibilities of that position to the department’s executive librarian positions without hiring a new librarian, the department has effectively lost a full-time employee. Although it is detrimental for the director to become either a micromanager or an absent leader, the director must remain engaged with the executive librarians so that they can get the guidance they need.

The creation of a diamond structure should be preceded by meetings where the goals of the new department are explicitly defined. This may be in the context of the old departmental goals or a new set of departmental or library-wide goals. At this meeting, the director should pledge the tools, support staff, and continuing educational opportunities to acknowledge and support the added burdens being assumed by the new executive librarians.

The actual transition should permit the group to set its own agenda as long as it is in keeping with the predefined departmental goals. If the librarians divide tasks, schedule themselves, and resolve conflicts internally, then they will likely be more effective working together in supervising others and completing their own projects.70

Finally, the director should make it clear that this career path change is part of an ongoing process. This will prepare the staff for the possibility that the new plan will fail due to logistics, the library’s changing needs, or personnel issues. In that case, they can meet again to reassess their decisions and develop alternatives. This gives all the librarians an understanding that the system is not set in stone and encourages creative problem solving when obstacles do arise. It is vital for everyone to understand that the process of change is continuous to avoid a sense of finality.\textsuperscript{71}

\section*{Fitting This New Career Path Structure into the Library}

Let us assume that the pyramid structure has been replaced with a diamond structure. Obviously the transition has changed the lives of the librarians, but it has also affected the director, the support staff, the other departments, and even the patrons. This section will discuss how the new career paths will change those relationships.

\subsection*{The Director}

Although little has changed in the grand scheme of things, the director may initially regret the change. There may be communication problems, new departmental tension, or decreased job satisfaction from those being supervised by the new executive librarians. It is important to let everyone get comfortable in their new roles before tinkering with tasks or becoming too involved in the department’s day-to-day decisions. This will prevent the director from being relied upon to settle internal disputes and the group will again need a head to resolve these internal problems.

Once the system is running smoothly, the director will have to keep track of which executive librarians are doing what so that outside inquiries can be directed to the appropriate librarian. Furthermore, the director is responsible for giving frequent constructive feedback and maintaining an open door to deal with departmental issues as they arise. There should be regular meetings with the director and an explicit understanding of how involved the director would like to be in the department’s internal decisions.

The diamond model will not save the director time. The pyramid hierarchy tends to limit vertical communication, so the director in that structure may not be aware of most departmental issues. In a diamond structure, the director becomes more aware and involved in the department’s major issues.

The Departmental Paraprofessionals
For those who were used to following one leader, the change to a group of decision makers may be quite complex and stressful. Prioritization of tasks becomes more difficult and the staff may not know to whom to turn in crisis situations. Although these concerns can be partially alleviated by careful planning and explanation, they are unlikely to disappear.

Another possible problem is resentment. If staff see professionals being given more flexibility and higher salaries, they may feel jealous or consider the treatment unfair. The director may be able to overcome this to some extent by emphasizing the scope of the executive librarians' managerial responsibilities and the burdens that come with the territory.

The Other Library Departments
The initial problem is that since there is no one accountable for the entire department, the head of another department may not know who to consult when an interdepartmental issue or problem arises. This can be overcome by scheduling meetings, creating e-mail groups, or designating liaisons to other departments to facilitate interdepartmental communications.

Professionals in other departments may feel that the librarians in the affected department are favored because they are getting increased responsibility, salaries, and access to the director. This can be countered by explaining that they are not favored, but that they are dividing the administrative load among several people rather than having it all fall on one person.

The Patrons
The goal of the library is to improve service to patrons. If the restructuring increases job satisfaction and extends the term of employment of some of the librarians, then patrons are likely to get better service. Both results lead to greater general experience, more specific experience with that collection, and increased knowledge of that library's patrons and their needs. All this contributes to better service. There may be experienced librarians who have plateaued and require new types of motivation before performing optimally, but experienced librarians have abilities and knowledge that newer librarians generally do not have.

The benefit to the patron of library restructuring comes not solely from increased librarian experience. It also furthers the library's ability to support and nurture a broader range of individuals. Since everyone has different strengths and weaknesses, the library as a whole can be more effective due to

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the staff's variety of interests and skills. Furthermore, this type of environment encourages innovative ideas that may improve the library's ability to meet its patrons' needs better.

Conclusion

It is in the library's interest to retain experienced librarians. To retain experienced librarians, libraries should increase the autonomy and career path flexibility of their existing positions. Without increased autonomy, the positions will not remain challenging. Without career-path flexibility, the positions will not be able to adapt to the librarians' changing interests. In particular, by offering experienced librarians career-path flexibility in the form of optional administrative experience, the library can retain both those interested in moving into administration and those interested in growing professionally in other ways.

Increased autonomy and career-path flexibility for individual librarians cannot be achieved in a vacuum. It can be either the cause or the effect of greater institutional change. Within the traditional hierarchical pyramid structure, autonomy is minimized and promotions are dependent on existing vacant positions. In a diamond structure, there is greater autonomy and flexibility. Librarians can become executive librarians without a preexisting vacancy. Autonomy and flexibility are encouraged by giving librarians a role in task selection, the assumption of administrative responsibility, and strategic decision making. Ultimately, staff retention benefits both the library and the librarians, thereby furthering the library's mission and goals.