

Final Report: Recommendations of the UMKC University Libraries' Organizational Development Task Force

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Ashley Davis
David Lindahl
Sandy Rodriguez
Kathleen Schweitzberger
Sue Sykes Berry
Garth Tardy
Cindy Thompson (chair)
Gloria Tibbs
Jessica Williams

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Summary

On April 3, 2013, the Organizational Development Task Force was convened with the following charge:

...investigating the needs for staff recognition and professional development for the University Libraries in support of the following strategic objectives:

Acknowledge and demonstrate the value of all library employees and celebrate accomplishments, creativity and risk-taking.

Encourage and invest in professional development for all library employees.

In particular, this task force is focused on determining areas of need for training, best practices for making training opportunities accessible to and for recognizing and celebrating library staff, and to make recommendations for the long-term coordination of recognition and professional development for Libraries' staff.

In the early stages of the task force's work, we determined that recognition of one's work and professional development are integrally related, and are key components of motivation in a strong organizational culture. A 2013 Gallup report on the American workplace found that 70% of workers are not engaged in their work, making them less productive. This is particularly difficult to address, as the idea that "however hard you try, you cannot motivate another human being" (Pershawaria, 2011) is widely accepted. Alqudsi-ghabra and Mansouri (2010) found that motivation varies based on the individual, necessitating customizing motivators to the individual. However, much research (Badu, 2005; Johannsen and Pors, 2002; Nkereuwem, 1992) finds that interesting, important work, and educational opportunities are common motivating factors. More importantly, motivational theory holds that intrinsic (non-tangible) motivators are most effective (Deci, 1975; Herzberg, 1966; Maslow, 1954). The task force kept this close connection between recognition and motivation in mind throughout our discussions, and the recommendations below reflect proposals that we hope will tie these important facets together.

Also as a part of our information gathering, the task force conducted extensive interviews with nearly every staff member of the University Libraries. Almost all of the recommendations below are the direct result of an idea or concern raised in those interviews, which were an extremely valuable way to tap the creativity of library employees and to gain insight into our needs.

Based on what we have learned, we would like to propose the following five major objectives, which we describe in detail below:

1. Develop a series of planned events and activities designed to help us better know each other professionally and socially across departments, particularly to learn about each other's work and its importance
2. Formalize certain communication efforts that focus on the individual and team accomplishments of library employees

3. Establish an organized internal professional development program with required and elective components
4. Encourage peer and end-user recognition for all library employees
5. Change our processes to rectify systemic issues that damage motivation and make it difficult to do our work

While suggested timelines are included in the described objectives and goals, the task force recognizes that there may be circumstances that make those timelines unrealistic. We also recognize that not all proposals will be implemented. However, we have selected projects from our list that seem realistic and doable, and hope that eventually some form of all goals will be accomplished. Also, because ongoing assessment is a critical part of any project, we recommend that the conversations conducted as a part of the task force's investigation be repeated in one or two years to gain feedback on the success of implemented projects.

As a note, it is important to recognize that in this report, "library employees" refers to all library employees, regardless of their HR designation. In the very few situations where it is important to distinguish between groups of library employees by HR designation, the HR terminology is used.

Develop a series of planned events and activities

One of the most common themes underpinning the interviews with library employees was the general perception that the day-to-day work accomplished by individuals was not well understood by either their colleagues or their supervisor. While some departments or divisions had good internal relationships, this was far from universal. According to the research of Christine Riordan (2013), "Camaraderie is more than just having fun... It is also about creating a common sense of purpose and the mentality that we are in it together... camaraderie promotes a group loyalty that results in a shared commitment to and discipline toward the work." Because sense of importance and feeling of belonging are important intrinsic motivators (Whitely, 2002), the task force believes this is a major issue that needs to be addressed.

Based on what we learned, it became quickly apparent that we would be far more successful in our goals if we knew each other better across departments, professionally and socially, and better understood the work of others.

To meet this objective, we have the following goals. Ideally, one of the event-type goals would happen each week.

1. Develop a program of regular departmental open houses.

Timeline: Beginning in late 2013.

Responsibility: Administrative offices for scheduling, individual departments for planning.

Cost: Staff time (approximately 1 hour for each person participating, plus additional time for the departmental hosts).

Description: A regular time would be set aside each month for departmental open houses. Departments would be expected to develop a brief presentation on the work that they do as a department and their major projects and initiatives, and provide introductions to each staff member and their individual contributions to the work of the team.

Rationale: To better understand the work that we do, and how it relates to the work of others.

2. Develop a job-shadowing program.

Timeline: In conjunction with departmental open houses.

Responsibility: Individual departments.

Cost: Staff time (30 minutes to 1 hour for each job shadowing session).

Description: At departmental open houses (or shortly after, if someone had a conflict), individuals in that department would offer a signup sheet for a number of time slots for job shadowing, during which they would demonstrate a key aspect of their position (like planning for instruction, talking someone through cataloging a record, demonstrating basic book repair, etc.). These would go into more depth than is possible in a larger open house, and provide staff with an opportunity to see in great detail some of the work completed by their colleagues.

Rationale: To better understand the work that we do, and how it relates to the work of others.

3. Monthly social/networking events.

Timeline: Fall 2013.

Responsibility: A newly established committee or individual designated by the dean, or the staff appreciation committee.

Cost: Light refreshments, possibly some supplies for activities; staff time.

Description: Monthly events to be held during library hours (varying the time so that evening and morning staff can participate). These would be semi-planned events with activities targeted at facilitating conversations and getting people to talk outside of their regular workgroups. Those charged with planning the events would be responsible for monitoring events and adjusting activities based on the level of participation.

Rationale: To know each other better across departments, professionally and socially, and better understand the work of others.

4. Plan small group field trips.

Timeline: Summer 2014.

Responsibility: Administrative office for initial coordination, small groups of library employees for detail planning.

Cost: Staff time; use of library car, possibly mileage on personal vehicles.

Description: Individuals could propose locations for field trips to the administrative office, with the limit that field trip location be relatable to libraries. Administrative office could send out a list of possible locations to gauge interest, and those signing up would work together to determine scheduling, transportation, and any other logistics. Following a field trip, the group as a whole would submit a short written or oral report on what they saw and learned. This program would need to be evaluated at least annually.

Rationale: To know each other better across departments, professionally and socially. To see what other libraries and library related institutions are offering, then relate them back to their work. Ideally these field trips would incorporate library employees at all levels and from around the library, giving the added benefit of knowing colleagues better and getting the perspectives of those outside of your workgroup.

5. Plan regular departmental lunches with the dean.

Timeline: Spring 2013.

Responsibility: Administrative offices.

Cost: None.

Description: The dean would join a department each month for a lunch, either brown-bag or outside of the library. Departments would work with the dean (or Dean's assistant) to determine the best time and location for their assigned month.

Rationale: To better know the dean, and for the dean to gain a greater understanding of individual contributions.

Formalize certain communication efforts

Communication is an ongoing issue in all organizations. In 2000, the co-authors Chivers, Green, and Mynott pointed out that "having a motivated staff is dependent upon management practices that encourage communication, involvement in decision making..." While there is no realistic mechanism for perfect communication, the task force has identified several things that can positively influence the communication that surrounds recognition of individual accomplishments. To meet this objective, the task force recommends the following goals.

1. Share more detail on day-to-day work in monthly reports.

Timeline: Immediately.

Responsibility: Divisional directors.

Cost: Staff time.

Description: Monthly reports vary greatly, with some providing very little information, some providing very much, and some divisions not submitting them to the library employees at all. While there is no desire to standardize these reports, it is our recommendation that these reports begin or continue to reflect the day-to-day work of all library employees within the division, and acknowledge the contributions of all individuals.

Rationale: To better understand the work of others, and recognize individual contributions to the libraries' mission.

2. Recognize individuals at all-staff meetings.

Timeline: Immediately.

Responsibility: Dean, and those who report to the dean.

Cost: None.

Description: The dean is often aware of the individual accomplishments of staff members, but generally defers to directors, supervisors, and the individuals in recognizing these accomplishments publicly. In this case, the dean would announce accomplishments at the meetings, based either on what she knows or on what others in the library suggest as possible items to recognize, including reading complimentary notes and sharing stories or anecdotes. This would need to be done with respect to the individuals who prefer not to be singled out in public.

Rationale: To better understand the work of others, and publicly recognize individual contributions to the libraries' mission at a high administrative level.

3. Use monitor in entrance to recognize individuals and major accomplishments.

Timeline: Immediately.

Responsibility: Administrative offices.

Cost: None.

Description: Currently, the public display monitor on the ground floor is used to display library events and news, and very occasionally to recognize major

accomplishments (like major awards). The task force recommends expanding this to include less major accomplishments (like recent publications, honors, or milestones), or even simply to draw attention to individual employees. This could be something like the LibGuides “Featured Librarian” section, or a slide with a “Say hi to ____ when you see them” message, but any implementation of this would ideally include a photo and a small amount of information about the individual and the work that they do.

Rationale: To better understand the work of others, and publicly recognize individual contributions to the libraries’ mission.

4. Send regular announcements about major occurrences in the library.

Timeline: Immediately.

Responsibility: Dean’s Advisory Team.

Description: Currently, the DAT minutes serve as the primary communication mechanism for major announcements and updates to library employees, supplemented by the all-staff meetings. Several small changes could help this mechanism be more useful as a communication tool:

- Clarify the charge for DAT (this could be included as a standard section in the minutes).
- Include the purpose of the DAT minutes in the email announcement when those minutes are available, emphasizing that it is the primary written communication mechanism for major library updates.
- Include information on upcoming projects, and projects that are still in the very early stages.

Rationale: To enhance communication and awareness of the work of the libraries’.

5. Provide more detailed and timely budget information.

Timeline: Immediately.

Responsibility: Dean and Libraries’ Fiscal Officer.

Description: The Libraries’ budget is one of the primary sources of confusion and consternation among library employees at all levels. Very little information is currently available, and that information is not very detailed. Some people expressed a reluctance to ask for even needed supplies because they are constantly told that the budget is so bad with no specifics. Based on the input we received, the task force recommends that the following processes and

informational items be communicated to library employees regularly and in writing:

- Send an announcement when the budget worksheet on N drive is updated.
- Provide a finer level of detail for the budget worksheet that is available to library employees (this may not be the finest level of detail available).
- Discuss the budget bottom line, changes, and challenges at an all-staff meeting at least once a year, and how certain things (like mandates from campus, merit increases, and inflation) affect individual library employees.
- Communicate whenever appropriate why difficult decisions have been made, particularly when requests for funding are denied.

Establish an organized internal professional development program

One major component of this task force's charge was to examine the professional development needs of the library employees, and to establish a long-term mechanism for ensuring that timely and appropriate professional development is available at all levels. Additionally, library employees frequently noted an overall lack of training for supervisors. In *Finding Your True North: A Personal Guide* (2008), Bill George and his co-authors state, "Leadership in the twenty-first century is vastly different from leadership in the twentieth century. People in organizations have changed dramatically—to the point where they will no longer tolerate or be motivated by the 'command and control' leaders of the twentieth century. Nor will they be impressed by the charismatic leaders who say one thing and do another" (pp. xx). With this in mind, the task force recommends the following goals.

1. Establish a small group or an individual to be responsible for the coordination of training and professional development.

Timeline: Fall, 2013.

Responsibility: The supervisor(s) of the person or team designated for this role, through their annual appraisal.

Description: Past attempts to formalize or improve professional development within the libraries have often failed as a result of having too little time dedicated to coordination. It is imperative for the success of the other goals under this objective that there be a designated team or individual to take on this responsibility, and that the responsibility will be evaluated as a part of annual appraisals.

Rationale: To ensure long-term responsibility of professional development for libraries' staff.

2. Develop a program of mandatory training for supervisors.

Timeline: Summer 2014

Responsibility: Group or individual established in goal 1.

Description: While a variety of supervisory styles are normal, it is clear to the task force that the library employees would benefit greatly if supervisors received training to establish uniform expectations and ground rules. This program should include components of initial training for all supervisors, required annual workshops to address areas of need, a mechanism for constructive feedback to supervisors, and increased awareness of optional training opportunities. Ideally, this training would include topics like recognition, motivation, common values and principles, ethics, EQ vs. IQ, differing styles of management, and building relationships. The program should be assessed regularly, possibly by asking library employees if they have seen any change in their supervisors after the training, or by conducting regular 360-degree appraisals.

Rationale: To provide consistent expectations of supervisors throughout the Libraries, to improve the knowledge and skill of supervisors, and to provide a feedback loop for continuous improvement.

3. Develop a library-wide professional development program.

Timeline: Fall 2014

Responsibility: Group or individual established in goal 1.

Description: There are a number of training opportunities available in this region, but to this date the libraries have done very little internally, and even less has been mandatory. We propose that a program be established for the coordination of professional development. This program should include components of required annual workshops (several sessions of the same workshop) and increased awareness of optional internal and external professional development opportunities, particularly webinars. There are a number of topics that would be of universal interest and that would be of greatest benefit if conducted with all library employees to establish cultural norms and understanding. Initially, it appears that topics of key interest and importance would include developing expectations of colleagues and supervisors, building relationships, and managing change. The program should be assessed regularly, both for the effectiveness of past training sessions and to determine topics for future training and development.

Rationale: To provide consistent expectations of library employees, to improve the knowledge and skill, and to provide a feedback loop for continuous improvement.

Encourage peer and end-user recognition for all library employees

The importance of the casual thank you was a recurring theme in the task force's information gathering. While the informality of this type of recognition is its key characteristic, some processes can be put into place to ensure that the importance of the casual thank you is widely known. In addition to the goals listed below, the task force recommends including this concept in the internal training program.

1. Provide a thank you/comment box for the public in all libraries.

Timeline: Fall 2013.

Responsibility: Administrative offices or DAT, with assistance from library departments.

Description: A simple paper comment box for the submission of anonymous compliments, comments, and questions was a popular idea among library employees. A simple form (requesting an email address if the individual would like some form of follow-up, particularly if they ask a question) and box could be placed in a public location, and invite library patrons to provide feedback. Feedback would be sorted and shared with individuals, groups, and the libraries as appropriate. For example, comments relating to a particular aspect of the libraries would be shared with the people working on that aspect, or comments relating to an individual would be shared with that person and their supervisor.

Rationale: To provide a mechanism to receive direct feedback from patrons for all library employees.

2. Provide a thank you/comments box for library employees.

Timeline: Fall 2013.

Responsibility: Administrative offices or DAT.

Description: An electronic mechanism for library employees to submit kudos and comments would be an excellent complement to the public comment box. The understanding of these would be that compliments would go to the dean, the individual complimented, and their supervisor, so that the recognition occurs at all levels. These could also be shared more widely. Comments would be screened and distributed to appropriate individuals. It is critical for the success of this program that it not become a vehicle for criticism, which should

be referred back to the initiating person for direct communication with the individual or their supervisor.

Rationale: To encourage peer and end-user recognition for good work and collegiality.

3. Solicit nominations of library employees for major awards.

Timeline: Immediately.

Responsibility: Designee(s) of the Dean.

Description: Library employees have received a number of awards, and this type of outside recognition is an excellent way to celebrate the accomplishments of the team. The role of this person or team would be to make a conscious effort to monitor calls-for-nomination for campus, system, local, regional, and national awards, and to identify potential candidates for those awards. They would then coordinate the nomination process.

Rationale: To more frequently recognize the work of library employees at a higher level.

Change our processes to rectify systemic issues

A number of the issues raised in individual discussions during the information-gathering phase revealed that a number of the biggest factors harming motivation and satisfaction were related to problems with library processes. The literature shows that resolving environmental issues, like those raised below, can be a simple and highly effective way to increase job satisfaction (Whiteley, 2002). Thus, the task force proposes the following:

1. Address inequalities (perceived and actual) in funding for travel and development through clearly articulated processes.

Timeline: By 2015 budget cycle.

Responsibility: Dean's Advisory Team.

Description: Currently, there is no clearly articulated process or rationale for the funding decisions relating to travel and development available to library employees. This causes many to not submit requests that may be funded, because they are not aware that funding is available to them. It also creates a perception of inequality and favoritism among some staff. The travel request process needs to have clear timelines (including both the regular request cycle in June and the ad-hoc requests that come in throughout the year), parameters for what is normally funded (particularly local conferences), and an explanation when requests are returned unfunded. An articulation of why inequalities in funding exist between library employees in differing HR classifications should also be a part of this process.

Rationale: To reduce perceptions of unfairness, and to encourage professional development at all levels.

2. Develop a baseline job description to be used library-wide.

Timeline: Complete work by Summer 2014.

Responsibility: A new task force formed to complete this task, which would also establish long-term responsibility as a part of their charge.

Description: There are no standard job expectations throughout the libraries, addressing issues like collegiality, contribution to the libraries (beyond day-to-day work), and work habits. The need for such standard expectations has been raised several times over the past year, beginning with the Pat Wagner webinar on creating a safe workplace. We propose that a task force be formed to pull together best practices, current templates used in various divisions and departments, UMKC HR suggestions, and the feedback from the Pat Wagner webinar to develop a baseline job description that would apply to all library employees.

Rationale: To articulate universal expectations that cross divisions and libraries, ensuring that we are all held to the same standards in appropriate areas.

3. Establish a mechanism for forming teams and task forces that encourages broader representation.

Timeline: Fall 2013.

Responsibility: Dean's Advisory Team.

Description: Committees, teams, and task forces often have very little diversity. Librarians tend to dominate these groups, particularly MNL librarians, and others who participate tend to be the same people all the time. It is our recommendation that more attention be paid to the mix of participants, and that there be more opportunities for library employees who do not usually participate to volunteer. While we recognize that a process for this is already in the works, this task force would like to ensure that levels of participation are monitored, and included as a part of everyone's appraisals. This may tie into the above goal, to develop a baseline job description.

Rationale: Contribution to the Libraries outside of one's day-to-day tasks can contribute to a greater awareness of the big picture, and to a better understanding of how critical each person's work is to the overall success of the Libraries.

4. Develop and maintain an orientation guide, outlining basic information helpful to all library employees.

Timeline: Completed by fall 2014.

Responsibility: A small task force comprised of recent hires and experienced employees, with that task force making recommendations for the long-term maintenance of the guide.

Description: Several recent hires have highlighted the current lack of a central employee handbook or guide to basic information. Having a central point of reference for basic questions will not only help new employees, but will also be of assistance to library employees who are taking on new duties, or have simply forgotten something. We envision that this includes information like floor maps, contact lists (similar to CAM's list), important calendars to watch, requesting supplies and equipment, definitions, and more. There are some starting documents that would be helpful to this task force, particularly divisional orientation documents.

Rationale: To limit the frustration that stems from not knowing who to contact or how to perform what should be a basic task, and to improve job satisfaction.

5. Recognize anniversaries of all types of library employees in the same manner whenever possible.

Timeline: Immediately.

Responsibility: Supervisors.

Description: There is currently no mechanism for honoring some HR categories of library employees. Currently, the dean provides personalized messages upon individual anniversaries at all levels, but library employees categorized by HR as regular (benefit eligible) administrative, service and support staff who have continuous service in increments of five (5) years are also eligible for service awards. While library employees not eligible for these awards did not necessarily advocate for receiving the gifts associated with the service dates, it was clear that they would like the same level of recognition.

Rationale: To reduce perceptions of unfairness and to recognize library employees at all levels.

Additional considerations

During our information gathering, a number of excellent ideas were suggested, and some of those are either impractical at this time, or a violation of university policy. We would like to acknowledge some of these, and address why they were not included as a part of our recommendations.

1. Establish a library-wide award or recognition program.

Many library employees suggested variations on this theme, including a reworking of the Blue Roo, an annual award program (possibly with an incentive tied to the award like a small or large gift card, time off, or a gift), and an annual celebration honoring anniversaries and other accomplishments.

During the course of our information gathering, library employees generally had strong opinions on this type of program, but there was a clear divide between those who supported and those who opposed it. It was clear to the committee that a program of this sort would not be effective at this time, but that it would certainly be worth exploring again in three to five years. Additionally, there is language in the Collected Rules and Regulations ([360.150](#)) governing incentive programs that would have to be addressed if we began to tie a tangible benefit to the program.

2. Establish a staff advisory council.

Staff advisory councils are a common way to increase communication between staff and administration. Task-force members and other library employees cited a number of examples of how this could work, including having regular meetings with the administration, running all-staff meetings, coordinating staff recognition, and advocating for library employees. However, this task force believes that such a group would be far more effective if it were formed sometime after the implementation of our recommendations. Thus, we propose that this idea be revisited in three to five years.

3. Provide additional merit and cost-of-living increases to library employees.

While compensation was outside of the scope of this committee, we would be remiss if we did not make clear that this topic came up numerous times during our discussions. We recognize that the decisions relating to pay increases are often not in the hands of the libraries' administration, it is important to acknowledge the dissatisfaction associated with so few pay increases over the course of many years, and the issues raised by compression, particularly as a result of the global grading project.

4. Provide additional funding to support membership in professional organizations.

This was a common theme, particularly among NTT faculty librarians. However, the Collected Rules and Regulations specifically prohibit this ([360.120 A.3.](#)).

5. Revisit the staff announcements newsletter.

Most people expressed that the Facebook page was good, but not an adequate replacement for Staff Announcements. However, because the original staff announcements newsletter was so time-intensive, and because we have already

proposed a number of ways to help library employees know each other better, we opted not to address the newsletter at this time.

6. Increase libraries' support of major social gatherings.

Ideas on this ranged from having the library provide main dishes for the holiday party to a fully catered annual celebration. Another common idea was to provide a pool of funds to each division or department, designated for team building and recognition. This is not recommended at this time due to budget constraints, and because there are other options that would reach the same goals of supporting these social gatherings without as much of a budgetary impact.

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