

Management Training in Library School: Do Gradu-t

Methodology

The study¹ was conducted by creating a survey via SurveyMonkey and asking librarians to voluntarily respond. It targeted eight American Library Association (ALA) and Public Library Association (PLA) listservs² that serve general library interests as well oibrarMani634.18ET E3(ϕ)0 745.68 Tm()JTJE3(an

them gain these skills as the ALA accreditation process offers little to standardize the curriculum across schools for the one management class most librarians take, if indeed they even take one.

So the question arises: If library students will encounter a

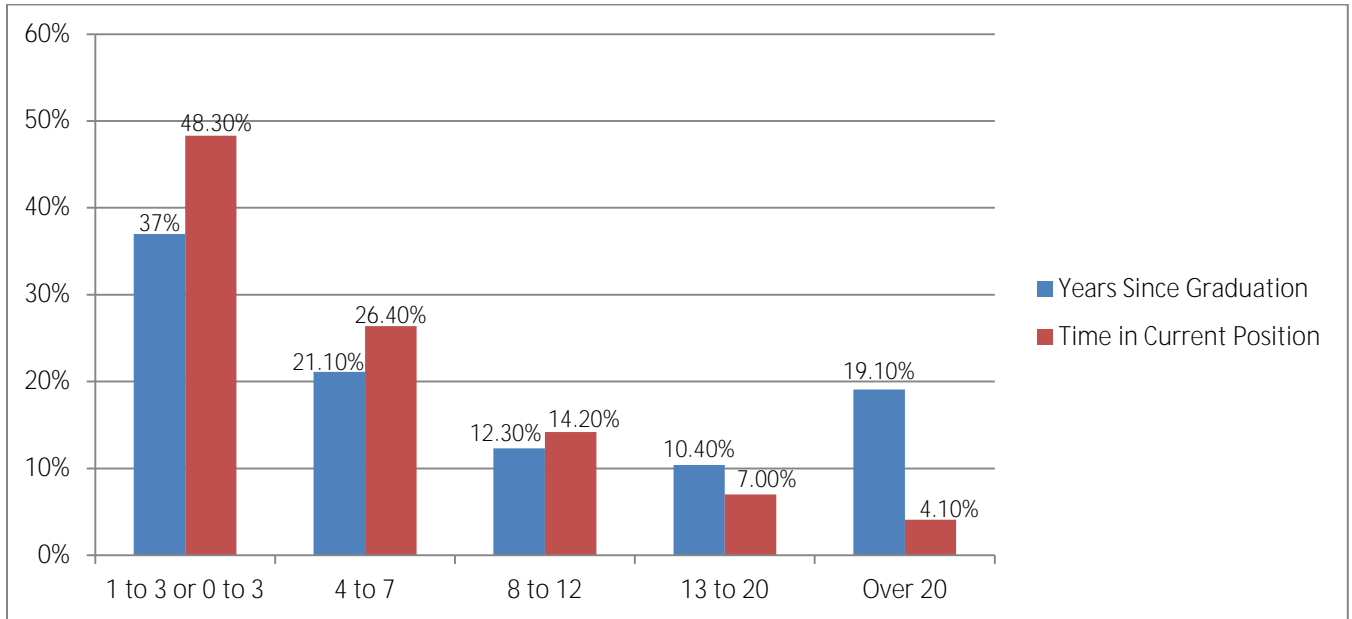


Figure 1: Years since Graduation Compared to Years in Current Position

The “management status” of each responder’s position was important because the authors were interested in seeing how current managerial duties may or may not affect response, as well as in getting some idea what percentage of responders actually were, or at least considered themselves, managers. There was the following disclaimer on this question: “We know ALL professional jobs have some type of management of people or resources or services, but here we are asking about whether your job would be considered a traditional management position,” which mirrors the belief that all librarians are managers whether they want to be or not. However, for purposes of this study the authors were looking at whether a responder’s job description labeled them as a manager or not. About one third of the responders (32.2%) considered themselves to have no management responsibilities. This ties very closely with those responders who have only been out of library school less than three years (32.7%), but more research will have to be done as even many “entry level” position descriptions seem to include a great deal of management responsibility and there are librarians who have worked for years in non-managerial positions. About a quarter of the respondents (25.4%) considered themselves to be “lower level

doing a good or adequate job training new librarians for the management duties they would encounter in the working world. With such a large gap between those who think the training is not or may not be adequate and those who think it is, it is clear that today's library schools are not meeting the challenge of training new managers. This survey is not alone in promoting this message. Mackenzie and Smith (2009) found that "... as a result of the lack of explicit guidance from ALA as to how the master's level curriculum should endure specific people-management learning outcomes, library managers enter the field at a disadvantage" (p. 140). And the need for management skills in librarianship is only increasing. In 2004, a group of British academic librarians presented a vision of the library in 2010. They felt library staff would increasingly need finance skills, marketing abilities and the ability to measure impact as well as provide for traditional information literacy (Parry 2007). Indeed there is little doubt that these skills are in higher demand today than they were even five years ago.

The disconnect between the availability of management classes and students' willingness to take them means that library schools must set the standard and insist all students have a strong core background in management. For anyone to assume that management is something that one can simply learn on the job at the expense of a well-run department or library seems impractical and detrimental to the profession. This article's authors submit that training in management while in library school, whether students plan to be manager

⁵ Based upon a 150,296 total population estimation.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/professionalresources/libfactsheets/alalibraryfactsheet02.cfm>

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Appendix

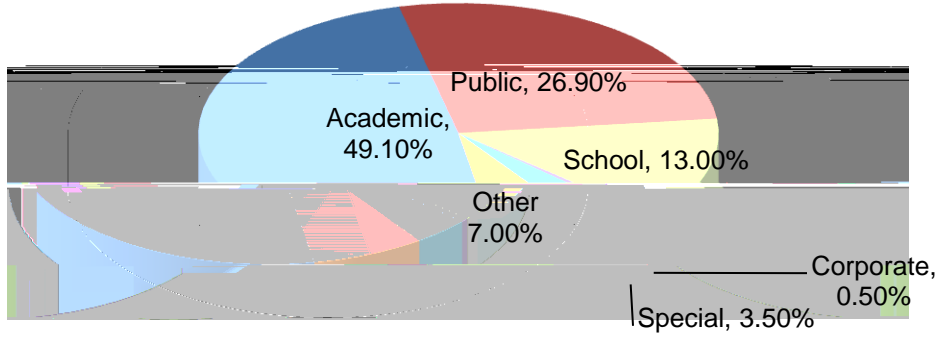
Survey and Results

1.) How long has it been since you graduated library school?

- a. 1-3 Years
- b. 4-7 Years
- c. 8-12 Years
- d. 13-20 Years
- e. Over 20 Years

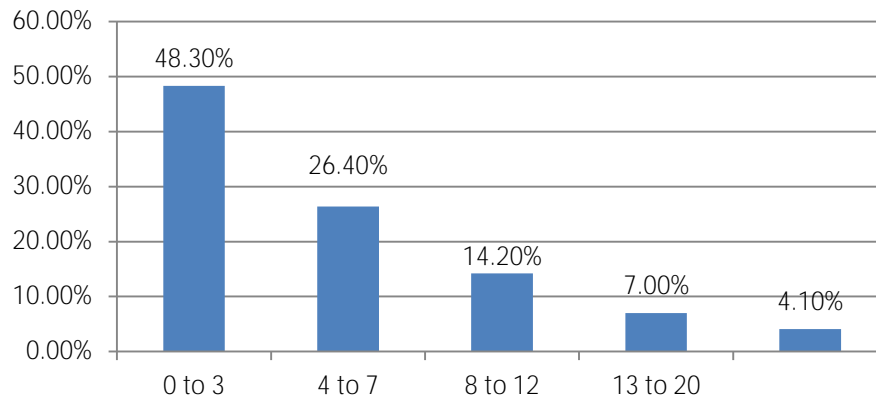
2.) What kind of library do you work in?

- a. Academic
- b. Public
- c. School
- d.



3.) How long have you been in your current position? If you are not currently employed, how long were you in your last position?

- a. 1-3 Years
- b. 4-7 Years
- c. 8-12 Years
- d. 13-20 Years
- e. Over 20 Years



4.) What is the “management status” of your current or most recent position? (*We know ALL professional jobs have some type of management of people or resources or services, but here we are

6.) Do you think your graduate program provided adequate coursework in management?

- a. Yes 41.5%
- b. No 58.5%

7.) Would you have taken additional courses in management if they had been offered knowing your feelings about management education AT THAT TIME?

- a. Yes, even as a student I wanted more management training. 38.1%
- b.

12.) Do you think library school today is properly training new librarians for the management duties/issues they will face in the working world?

a. Yes

14.4%