

REPORT TO MANAGER

Library Staff Development Program

Valdosta State University Library

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## Executive Summary

The need for a cost effective library staff training and development program and how to finance such a program is a concern of the chair of the Valdosta State University Library's Professional Development Committee. In the current economic recession, with budget cuts and hiring freezes the need for a cost effective library staff training and development program is critical. The purpose of this report is to identify and recommend alternative sources and methods of financing a library staff training and development program.

Recommendations in brief with cited references:

### Short Term Solutions

- The library should utilize free resources for library skills development. There is also a basic library skills learning manual available through the university library. (<http://www.Webjunction.org>, <http://www.librarysupportstaff.com> websites and <http://library.valdosta.edu:2050/lib/valdosta/docDetail.action?docID=10266317>)
- The library personnel could take some of the courses offered by the MLIS program, particularly courses offered in the Technology Track. Course syllabi are available at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/syllabi.shtml>
- Apply for the ALA's H.W. Wilson Library Staff Development Grant located at <http://www.ala.org/ala/awardsgrants/awardsrecords/wilsongrant/wilsongrant.cfm>

### Long Term Solutions

- The library could create a bridge with the MLIS program and either incorporate grant writing into an existing course or develop a new course that focuses on grant writing.
- Participate in the Library Support Staff Certification Program (LSSC) that was just started in 2010. (<http://ala-apa.org/lssc/>)
- Reorganize or restructure the library. As positions are eliminated more money will be available for training and development.

## Discussion

### Introduction

The Valdosta State University Library conducted a needs assessment survey in 1997. The results of this needs assessment survey are available at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/library/about/policy/profdev.shtml>. The chair of the library's Professional Development Committee's goal to develop library staff is in line with the university's strategic planning goals to develop faculty and staff. The results of the needs assessment, as well as a recent interview with library personnel, indicate a strong interest by staff in computer and Internet related training.

### Key Findings

During the interview, the client mentioned time and money as the two major barriers to staff development and also cited high turnover amongst entry-level staff as a problem. "Library managers should investigate the possibility of providing work-based learning activities for the staff in order to ensure that efforts are being exerted in enhancing skills and personal development of the staff." (2009, Montague)

### Library Support Staff Certification (LSSC)

A new (2010) certification program for library support staff, the LSSC, has been developed by the ALA. The candidacy fee for this program is only \$350 and it allows candidates to present a portfolio of work and get credit without taking courses. The certification focuses on three competency sets: Foundations of Library Services, Communication and Teamwork and Technology. The completion of such a program could be incorporated into raises or bonuses as incentives for employees to participate.

### Resources for MS Office and World Wide Web and other Training

In the 1997 needs assessment survey, MS Office and creating World Wide Web documents were consistently and overwhelming cited as areas of interest for all library personnel employees and by library faculty and technical services personnel in particular. My research has led to numerous sites that offer free or relatively inexpensive courses and tutorials on these subjects. For example, the following site offered training on MS Office, <http://www.lynda.com/home/websearch.aspx?q=ms+office>, and another site, located at <http://www.w3schools.com/> offers free tutorials in all web development technologies. Google offers a tutorial that is free and very convenient. The site is located at <http://docs.google.com/support/bin/static.py?hl=en&page=guide.cs&guide=21008> and provides instruction on how to create, edit and share documents in Google docs.

The MLIS course 7505 – Applied Technologies in Library Practice- is an excellent course for learning how to develop web documents. See the syllabus at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/syllabi/documents/MLIS7505SUMMER2010.pdf>.

Online resources such as Webjunction.org, “where library staff gather to learn” and LibrarySupportStaff.com, “resources for on the job in libraries have a wealth of information for library staff.

### Grants

Also, while conducting my research I was able to uncover the H.W. Wilson Library Staff Development Grant. This grant is “an annual award consisting of \$3,500 and a 24k gold-framed citation given to a library organization whose application demonstrates greatest merit for a program of staff development designed to further the goals and objectives of the library organization.” See instructions on how to apply at: <http://www.pla.org/ala/awardsgrants/awardsrecords/wilsongrant/wilsongrant.cfm>.

### Reorganization

Based on a review of the organizational chart for the university library, I noted 51 positions structured in the traditional bureaucratic fashion. Libraries are generally known to be bureaucratic and restructuring can help alleviate some of the redundancies. Reorganizing to a flatter/horizontal structure will allow the library to operate more efficiently and effectively, eliminate redundancies, and create more opportunities for development.

Also, the library could benefit by bridging the development of its library staff with the MLIS program at the university. Coursework and projects that develop the students, such as grant writing, would also benefit the library. The university advises students of scholarship and grant monies, it would be nice to have the students reciprocate.

### Conclusion

The need for a cost effective library staff training and development program and how to finance such a program has been identified. The two major barriers to such a program, lack of time and money, can be alleviated in varying degrees of functionality with creativity and objectivity. I have attempted several recommendations for your review.

## Annotated Bibliography in Order of Priority

Anderson, E. (2007) *Learn basic library skills*. Retrieved from <http://library.valdosta.edu:2050/lib/valdosta/docDetail.action?docID=10266317>

This book could be used as a training tool for entry-level staff. The content includes chapters on cataloging, circulation, shelving, inventory and bibliographic tools.

Grady, J. (2009). Answering the calls of “what’s next” and “library workers cannot live by love alone” through certification and salary research. *Library Trends*, 58(2), 229-245.

This article discussed the insights that have emerged from fulfilling elements of ALA strategic plans concerning the needs of support staff through certification and the salary survey.

Montague, R.A. & Steadley, M. (2006) Multifaceted CPD: developing a program to meet the diverse needs of LIS professionals. In P.W. Genoni (Ed.), *Continuing professional development: preparing for new roles in libraries: a voyage of discovery*. (pp. 75-82). Retrieved from <http://library.valdosta.edu:2050/lib/valdosta/docDetail.action?docID=10256550>

This article discusses the results of a needs assessment survey of an academic library similar to the results of the survey conducted by VSU. It provides several recommendations for academic library managers on page 81.

Valdosta State University's Strategic plan, 2006-2011  
<http://www.valdosta.edu/planning/documents/2006-11StrategicPlanningGoals.pdf>

This site was referenced while developing recommendations.

Odum Library > About Us > Procedures & Policies > Professional Development Committee <http://www.valdosta.edu/library/about/policy/profdev.shtml>

This site was referenced while developing recommendations.

## Websites

<http://www.librarysupportstaff.com/stafftrain.html>

Resources for on the job in libraries.

<http://www.webjunction.org/do/Home>

Webjunction is where library staff gather to learn.

<http://www.pla.org/ala/awardsgrants/awardsrecords/wilsongrant/wilsongrant.cfm>

American Library Association, H.W. Wilson Library Staff Development Grant.