

The Future of Academic Librarians: A Ten-year Forecast of Librarian Supply and Demand

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Topics Covered In Presentations

- Data Collection Methods
- Past Trends in Number of Academic Libraries and MLS Librarians
- Trends in Academic Library Staff Structure
- Career Paths of Academic MLS Librarians
- Attitudes Toward Work-related Issues, Librarianship and their Education
- Demand for Academic MLS Librarians
- Supply of Academic MLS Librarians

Data Collection Methods

- Institute of Museum and Library Services sponsored study of the future of librarians in the workforce
- Survey of 3,772 Academic Libraries reported in the *American Library Directory*
 - 3,022 contacted through e-mail
 - 822 responded
- *Web-based survey divided in two parts*
 - One part common to all respondents
 - One part had in depth questions about operations, services, functions performed in the library, and importance of competencies
 - One part asked librarians to forward a survey to staff
- *Staff survey included:*
 - 1,333 responses from paid staff
 - 847 responses from MLS librarians
- *“MLS Librarians” are those who have a graduate degree from a program accredited by ALA*

Past Trend of Number of Academic Libraries and Librarians MLS

- 3,772 Academic Libraries (2007-08) include:
 - 2,601 university and college libraries
 - 1,171 community college libraries

Trend in Number of Academic Libraries	
Year	No. of Libraries
1983	2,960
2002-03	3,480
2007-08	3,772

Past Trend of Number of Academic Libraries and Librarians MLS (cont.)

Trend in MLS Librarians (FTE)		
Year	Number (FTE)	Avg. Per Library
1982	21,200	7.16
1998	24,815	Unknown
2007	26,523	7.03

- Headcount of MLS Librarians is 29,278:
 - 19,561 full-time, 12 months
 - 2,572 full-time, 9 months
 - 4,528 part-time, 12 months
 - 2,617 part-time, 9 months

Trend in Staff Structure

- Number and Proportion of categories of staff in 2002-03 and 2007-08
- Proportion of Libraries that employ staff in 2002-03 and 2007-08
- Average number of staff per library in 2002-03 and 2007-08

Table 1. Proportion (%) and Total Number of Paid Staff (Headcount) by Staff Category in 2002-2003 and 2007-2008 (n = 646)

Category of Staff	2002-03		2007-08	
	(%)	Total	(%)	Total
MLS Librarian	32.8	27,698	33.1	29,278
Other Librarian	2.3	1,909	2.3	2,063
Other professional	4.0	3,376	4.6	4,115
Paraprofessional	33.1	27,977	33.7	29,840
Non-professional	27.8	23,522	26.3	23,251
Total	100.0	84,482	100.0	88,547

Library Survey

Table 2. Proportion (%) of Libraries and Average Number of Staff per Library (Headcount) by Staff Category in 2002-03 and 2007-08 (n = 646)

Category of Staff	2002-03		2007-08	
	(%)	Average	(%)	Average
MLS Librarian	96.0	7.34	98.0	7.76
Other Librarian	27.2	0.51	28.1	0.55
Other professional	30.7	0.89	34.5	1.09
Paraprofessional	77.9	7.42	80.3	7.91
Non-professional	46.8	6.24	48.0	6.16
Total		22.40		23.47

Library Survey

Career Paths of Academic MLS Librarians

- Work experience prior to being an MLS Librarian
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- Age at which MLS Librarians earned their MLS degree
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- Level of employment by number of years experience
↓
- Type of work by number of years experience
↓
- Reasons MLS Librarians leave the workforce

Table 3. Proportion (%) of MLS librarians Who Had Worked Full-time in a Library, but not as a Librarian or an Another Occupation Before Joining the Library Workforce by Range of Time Worked: 2007-08 (n = 847)

Proportion (%) Who Worked in:		
Years Worked	A Library	Another Occupation
Less than 2	18.5	8.4
2 to 4	40.2	33.4
5 to 9	25.5	26.2
10 to 14	9.4	10.8
15 or more	6.4	21.2
Total	100.00	100.00

Staff Survey



**Table 4. Proportion (%) of Academic MLS Librarians by Age at Which they Earned Their
MLS Degree in 2007 (n = 771)**

Age	Proportion (%) MLS Librarians
Under 25 years old	20.2
25 to 29 years old	32.6
30 to 34 years old	19.0
35 years and over	28.2
Total	100.0

Staff Survey

Table 5. Proportion (%) of MLS Librarians and Their Level of Employment by Years of Experience in 2007-08 (n= 822)				
Years of Experience				
Level of Employment	All Librarians	Less than 10 Years	10 to 19 Years	20 or More Years
Director	7.1	1.5	6.8	11.8
Assistant or Associate Director	6.0	0.8	7.7	9.2
Department or Branch Head	27.5	17.9	32.9	31.4
Other supervising capacity	9.6	14.5	7.2	7.7
Non-supervisory capacity	45.8	61.5	41.4	36.7
Other	4.0	3.8	4.1	3.3
All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Staff Survey

Table 6. Proportion (%) of MLS Librarians and the Department to Which They Are Primarily Assigned by Years of Experience in 2007-08 (n = 472)				
Years of Experience				
Department Assigned	All Librarians	Less than 10 Years	10 to 19 Years	20 or More Years
Library not organized by department	12.5	17.9	6.8	8.7
Administration (not specific to a dept.)	8.6	0.9	7.3	17.3
Acquisitions	4.6	7.3	4.8	4.5
Technical services	13.6	13.6	10.5	11.3
User services (e.g., circulation)	6.5	8.2	8.9	5.6
Reference and research	37.4	54.5	42.7	35.1
Special collections	3.3	2.7	5.6	3.4
Systems	3.1	0.9	5.9	0.6
Other/unknown	10.4	11.8	10.5	13.4
Total	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0

Staff Survey



Table 7. Proportion (%) MLS Librarians Who Left the Library Workforce by Reasons in 2007-08 (n = 821)	
Reasons Left	Proportions (%) Who Left
Death, illness or disability	16.0
Retirement	57.8
Employed in another occupation	9.8
Family obligation, education, military etc.	9.0
Downsized, laid off, quit	2.2
Other/unknown	5.1
Total	99.9

Library Survey

Academic Librarian Attitudes Toward Work-Related Issues, Librarians in and how well they were educated

- Attitude toward work-related issues
 - Salaries
 - Fringe benefits
 - Geographic location
 - Type of work
 - Opportunities for advancement
- Attitude toward Librarianship
 - Would they choose librarianship again
- Attitude toward how well LIS education prepared them for their work
 - Initial assignment
 - Current position

Ratings (1 to 5) of Importance of and Satisfaction with work-related issues

Work-related Issues	Ave. Importance (1 to 5)	Ave. Satisfaction (1 to 5)
Salary	4.00	3.31
Fringe Benefits	3.98	3.68
Type of work done	4.34	4.21
Opportunities for Advancement	3.44	3.00
Geographic Location	4.01	4.03

Staff Survey (*n* = 966)

Question: If you could choose your career again, would you still choose Librarianship?

- Response

- Definitely (1) 1.9%
- Probably not (2) 8.7%
- Unsure (3) 16.2%
- Probably (4) 36.8%
- Definitely (5) 36.4%

- By years of experience (Ave.)

- Less than 10 years: 4.05
- 10 to 19 years: 3.88
- 20 or more years: 3.97
- All: 3.97

Satisfaction Ratings of those who probably or definitely would and ...

Work-related Issue	Ave. Satisfaction Would	Ratings Would Not
Salary	3.97	2.78
Fringe Benefits	4.02	3.30
Type of Work Done	4.36	3.28
Opportunities for Advancement	3.40	2.37
Geographic Location	4.02	3.56

Staff Survey (*n* = 773)

Question: Please rate how well your library or Information Education prepared you for your (1) Initial Assignment and (2) Current Assignment

Rating (1-7)	Initial Assignment (%)	Current Position (%)
Not at all well (1)	3.2	6.6
(2)	5.5	9.2
(3)	7.9	11.1
(4)	28.6	32.4
(5)	21.6	16.7
(6)	19.9	14.5
Extremely well (7)	13.4	9.4
Ave. Rating	4.73	4.25

Staff Survey (n = 799)

Ratings of how well LIS Education prepared MLS Librarians for their work by level of employment

Level of Employment	Average Ratings (1-7)	
	Initial Assignment	Current Position
Library Direction	4.98	4.36
Ass't./Assoc. Director	4.14	3.69
Department/Branch Head	4.8	4.17
Other Supervisory Capacity	4.80	4.36
Non-supervisory Capacity	4.71	4.33
All	4.73	4.25

Staff Survey (n = 773)

Estimate of Ten-year Demand for Academic MLS Librarians

- **Based on:**
 - Attraction from current level of workforce (29,278 MLS Librarians)
 - Current vacancies to be filled (401)
 - Forecast of number of new positions to be filled (118)
- **Methods:**
 - Attraction by actuarial-like analysis
 - Vacancies reported by academic libraries
 - Forecast based on BLS ten-year forecast
 - Number of MLS librarians grew during pasts recessions

**Table 8. Total Academic MLS Librarian Demand by Source of Demand by
Years 2007-08 to 2016-17.**

Year	Total Attrition	Current Vacancies	Expected Positions	Total Demand
2007-08	1,738	401	17	2,156
2008-09	1,633	0	17	1,650
2009-10	1,568	0	16	1,584
2010-11	1,531	0	17	1,548
2011-12	1,472	0	17	1,489
2012-13	1,413	0	17	1,430
2014-15	1,387	0	16	1,403
2015-16	1,241	0	17	1,258
2016-17	1,160	0	17	1,177
Total	14,502	401	168	15,071

Evidence of the supply of Academic MLS Librarians

- 5,850 MLS Librarians received degrees in 2008-09
- About 4,500 took jobs in libraries
- The Library surveys (workforce) indicated 4,057 MLS graduates were hired in 2006 of which 1,380 were hired in Academic libraries
- The demand for all MLS librarians is 62,320
- If the supply remains constant the demand fast out paces the available supply
- The increase in supply capacity required ranges from a doubling to quadrupling of the current capacity
- The Academic MLS librarian workforce could be in dire straights