

NCLA PAY EQUITY PROJECT

BACKGROUND AND NEED

During her term as president of NCLA, Pauletta Bracy organized a Task Force on Pay Equity to investigate issues of pay equity for library personnel in North Carolina. Conventional wisdom tells us that professions composed mainly of women have been compensated at a lower level than professions composed mainly of men. Additional factors that may figure into the low salaries for librarians, paraprofessionals, and clerical staff include:

- the impact of technology in libraries without the revision of position classifications and position descriptions,
- the trend for paraprofessional and clerical staff to perform duties previously considered “professional” without additional compensation,
- the issue of salary compression facing experienced staff,
- the “service” stereotype of librarians, and
- that persons setting salaries may lack knowledge of the education and interpersonal skills necessary to manage a library.

One of the initial actions of the Task Force was to conduct a literature search to determine what information might be available. The search revealed that the salary information available for North Carolina library personnel was dated and, as a result, the topic warranted further study. Should further study reveal there is not pay equity, the Task Force has determined that it may need to take additional steps to accomplish its charge: to educate librarians, library staff and library customers regarding the role and value of the modern librarian so that they may be compensated fairly.

Current NCLA President Robert Burgin supports the continuation of this investigation and the work of the Pay Equity Task Force.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Since the members of the Task Force are not professionals in the field of salary equity but librarians with working knowledge of salaries within their own organizations and hold full-time jobs of their own, they will contract with a professional consultant in the field of salary equity to guide the process of project planning and implementation. The project will be in two phases:

Phase One: Planning and Development of Project Methodology

The Task Force identified a consultant in the field of pay equity and received an LSTA grant to retain the services of the Singer Group, Inc. During the planning phase, the Task Force also contacted the Director of the IMLS study “The Future of Librarians in the Workforce” at UNC-Chapel Hill to determine if there might be project duplication. During those discussions, the Future of Librarians investigators proposed that they conduct the survey on our behalf as part of their larger survey about the library profession.

Phase Two: Survey Development and Implementation

During phase two, a survey will be designed to collect data about the pay and benefits of library personnel in the North Carolina Community College System; The University of North Carolina; the public libraries of North Carolina; the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities; and of comparable non-librarian positions in North Carolina. This survey will be incorporated in a larger IMLS survey. Other steps include the piloting of the survey, survey data collection and analysis, and design and development of a North Carolina library personnel salary database.

Phase Three: Development of Web-based Educational Materials and Tools

Materials and tools will be prepared for use by library employees to enable them to advocate for improved compensation and pay equity. The goal for products that might be created during the project will be to design those that are easily accessible and adaptable to individual and/or organizational needs. They will be developed for the convenience of busy librarians and staff who often feel the need to just “grab and go.” Actual products may include:

- Web accessible North Carolina library salary database searchable where by individual library or position and find comparators libraries, organizations and/or positions.
- Written report that describes the project including its purpose, methodology, data analysis and findings.
- Web-based materials and tools for librarians and library staff similar to those in the ALA “Advocating for Better Salaries and Pay Equity Toolkit” but more accessible and very practical. Such things may include:
 - Brochure templates that can be configured to meet local needs using web-based data
 - PowerPoint presentations
 - Key speaking points.

PROJECT EVALUATION

At the end of the project, the library personnel of the library communities surveyed will have data and products that can be used to impact their future salaries and benefits. With the completion of this project, it will be very important for the North Carolina Library Association to use the data and products to their fullest advantage. In some ways this project and the work of the NCLA Pay Equity Task Force will serve as the beginning of an even larger and more important initiative for NCLA. The effectiveness and significance of this project can only be measured after NCLA and the library communities find useful application for the products and data developed during this project.

Likely, the leadership of NCLA will want to develop some long-term means of continuing to address the issues of pay equity identified during this project. They will

want to consider how best to do so using the data and products developed during the project proposed here. The Pay Equity Task Force should be prepared to submit recommendations to NCLA for its consideration for any future initiatives. Possible means for NCLA to address the effectiveness of this project include:

- Feedback from librarians regarding tools.
- Inexpensive future surveys of librarians regarding their success using the pay equity database. Could include flyer survey at 2007 NCLA conference.
- Review of library personnel's pay to see if there are any upward trends.
- Development of workshops or training sessions for library personnel in the effective use of product and tools.