Chapter 72


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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter was to convey the results of an exploratory survey given to human resource professionals working within the 123 institutional members of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). The objective was to further define the role of human resource professionals in ARL libraries and reveal the nature and extent of human resource support for faculty and staff at ARL libraries. Respondents were recruited through email and asked to characterize their human resource functions by answering 35 open-ended and closed survey questions via an online proprietary survey tool. The response rate was 30% and provided data for the researchers to examine the experience level and education of human resource professionals, the role these individuals play in the day-to-day library operations, and the extent of interaction with the university human resource department.

INTRODUCTION

The role of human resource management within higher education reflects a vital yet complex function of leadership and management that affects organizational development. An integral area of human resource management within academic organizations is a separate human resources department located within an academic library. Human resource personnel in academic libraries provide counsel and information to library administrators for decision making purposes, aid faculty and staff with human resource issues, and provide training and instruction to all library employees. In addi-
Analysis of Job Responsibilities of Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Human Resource

The tasks of academic library human resource personnel are similar to human resource departments at the university level; human resource personnel at many levels are familiar with employment laws, engage in hiring practices, participate in evaluations and performance appraisals, deal with conflict resolutions, offer training and professional development, recruit and train new hires, work with diversity initiatives, among other tasks. Even with the depth of responsibilities held by academic library human resource personnel there is a lack of literature supporting their function and duties.

Library human resource professionals are effective and strategic elements in change management. Library employees in the new millennium are seeking change from hierarchical styles of administration, casual styles of training, unspoken policies, the overuse of stagnant committees, and other attributes that lead to an organization’s character. Generally, employees want a clear focus of leadership goals and guidelines. The human resource representative is in a good position to mediate ideas and goals between all levels of administration and staff through assessment and accountability whereby identifying needed process changes and reinforcing behavioral changes (Kreitz, 2008, p. 104).

In his 2008 article, “Human Resource Administration in the Academic Library,” Dennis R. Defa emphasizes the sometimes complex human resource challenges found in a university library and recommends that a trained in-house (emphasis added) human resources professional would be better suited to handle such responsibilities in the academic library because of their familiarity with university policies. Large research libraries have unique staffing needs that differ from other areas of the university. Not only are there a large mix of positions working together (faculty, staff, students, etc.) and several library departments collaborating on projects (reference, collection development, technical services, etc.) but the...
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