Library Workers Today: Strong Staff Equals Strong Service
New Jersey Library Association 2017 Conference, Atlantic City

Poll the room (Moderator)

Poll the room to find what types of library workers we have (academic, public, special, librarian title or library staff). How long have you been working in libraries?

Introduce themes (Moderator)

DPE report will be distributed to attendees

Introduce Panelists

Julie Tozer, Camden County Library System
Aimee Fernandez, Elizabeth Public Library
Mary Jean Bakaletz, Warren County Library
Eamon Tewell, Long Island University, Brooklyn
Marc Meola, Community College of Philadelphia

Our Training Institutions

- Where there any surprises in your job? Were you adequately prepared by your library school education?
- Have you had to train new hires more than you anticipated? Are recent grads you have hired prepared?
- Do you see our training institutions supporting librarians in the workplace?
- Do you feel our training institutions could have addressed more issues like - gaining stakeholder support? Should they be focusing on the giving librarians the skills to sustain librarianship? Do you feel your chosen librarian focus needs were met?
- How do you feel about the trend in library schools to drop the L from their names/degrees?
- What is the impetus for non-librarian staff to consider getting a degree? What do they have to weigh?

Our Professional Organizations

- Why did you first join a profession organization?
- What did you expect to get out of it?
- Did you join to support libraries or be supported as a library worker?
- Do you feel libraries should be supported only by the people who run them?
- Whose job is it to get that support?
- Who do the organizations serve?

Our Workplaces (libraries, universities) and Our Colleagues

- Someone retires or leaves, can you fill the line? How do you fill their line? Have you ever absorbed another's job while you agree to hire a person for a new needed skill?
- Is it easier to hire a librarian, part time librarian/adjunct, or an administrative position that might do professional work (paraprofessional)?
- What problems are created by not filling positions as they are vacated? Have we part-timed our own profession? Are part timers not as invested?
- How do these increasingly common practices in regards to staffing affect library programs, initiatives and functionality?
- How do these staffing practices affect a worker trying cobbling together a career?
- In academic libraries, non-faculty librarians don't have to publish/do service so they have more time to be librarians?
- In public libraries, does the "race to the top in order to make a living wage" that we all have to fall in line with then move us away from service?

Our Communities

- How do (or maybe would?) you articulate what you do and why it is of value?
- Do you feel there is something important is not being said?
- What is the value of the "beyond business" hours and is it being handled effectively for both the libraries and the librarians?
- Is there value to libraries beyond for-profit values?
- How is the library perceived by the public--something to miss when it's gone?

Looking ahead…What other organizational models are available? Cooperative?

- Is a business structure really the best idea for our service model?
- Do business management models make the most sense?
- Build organized networks: we can do and demand more together than we can individually.