Introduction

ANNE WOODSWORTH

LARGE LIBRARIES, whether academic, public, special, or national, are
becoming increasingly complex to manage. In response to dramatic
societal, cultural, and technological changes, these libraries need an
increasingly broad array of talent to achieve their missions success-
fully. Not only are professional librarians with varying disciplinary
backgrounds required, but other professionals are needed such as
archivists, conservators, lawyers, fund-raisers, personnel experts, and
computer scientists, to name a few. As new technologies are integrated
into the fabric of already complex libraries, new problems will emerge
in human resource management, and previously successful solutions
will have to be reexamined.

This issue of *Library Trends* brings together a collection of
articles that discuss issues facing research libraries in trying to make
optimal use of their most valuable asset, their cohort of human
resources. A macro-analysis of the values and influences that shape
the North American work force by Russell Shank provides an
introductory setting for the issue. As he indicates, there have been
fundamental changes in how workers are viewed since World War
II. Both shifting cultural values and technological changes have
brought stresses and pressures that seem endless. Within the world
of research libraries, new ways of working, changes in interactions
between scholars and librarians, and changes in organizational
structures and funding are among the factors contributing to the
need to pay more attention to the management of human resources.

Anne Woodsworth, Palmer School of Library and Information Science, Long Island
University, Brookville, NY 11548

The first three chapters following Shank's article amplify both the nature of the diversity in the human resources pool of research libraries and explain the issues that indicate the need for concern. An overview of the types of specialists and professionals that work in research libraries is provided by Ellen Detlefsen. She describes how different types of professionals fit into research library organizations, their status, image, and functions.

An incontrovertible part of the world of the research library is the interaction of scholars, the information technologies, and librarians. Using a model developed in the health sciences field, Rachael Anderson and Sherrilynne Fuller explore the changing roles of librarians in the broader academic environment, particularly as members of interdisciplinary teams outside of traditional roles and library walls.

As a follow-up, Paula Kaufman discusses the differing cultures and value systems that must be accommodated as different professions work together in the research library environment. The kinds of tensions and conflicts that arise between professionals with a nonlibrary background and professional librarians are outlined, and suggestions are offered to eliminate barriers.

The articles by Leigh Estabrook et al., Anne Woodsworth et al., and Maureen Sullivan explore issues stemming largely from the technological changes occurring in research libraries and their parent institutions. They indicate that technological changes have begun to point to flaws in organizational structures such as the pay plans, position classification systems, and job definitions that exist for librarians, computing consultants, system designers, and technical experts as they support learning, research, and scholarship. Leigh Estabrook et al. discuss the extent to which jobs within libraries have altered. Maureen Sullivan addresses the reality and prospects of the disappearance of middle managers in research libraries. And Anne Woodsworth et al. describe the extent to which jobs in research libraries and computing centers are becoming similar.

Strategies for handling human resource needs of research libraries are provided by the final set of authors. Thomas Shaughnessy focuses on maximizing the potential of individuals in order to obtain the competencies needed within the changing research library environment. His experience with internships and developmental opportunities for staff point to successful options that research libraries can use in managing human resources. Jack Siggins takes a broader approach to a related problem and explores innovative approaches for creating and sustaining high levels of job satisfaction among information workers. Finally, Mary Wyly offers the experiences of the Newberry Library and its use of an uncommon

solution to staffing problems—the use of a cadre of volunteers to meet the needs of research libraries.

Despite a seemingly enviable large and diverse group of professionals and support staff, most research libraries are finding that their complement of human resources is inadequate to meet current service demands. Reductions in staff size, forced furloughs, and runaway escalation in the cost of library acquisitions as well as in the array of resources demanded by their users, are among the many factors that dictate the need to reexamine how human resources are managed in research libraries. These articles do not pretend to solve the endless and evolving array of personnel problems. They do, however, shed light on some of the more troubling issues facing research libraries in the 1990s.