Workforce Issues in Library and Information Science
Submitted by: Joanne Gard Marshall
                        Distinguished Alumni Professor
                        School of Information and Library Science
                        University of North Carolina
                        Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3360
                        marshall@ils.unc.edu

Panel Abstract:

The library and information science (LIS) workforce is older on average than other professions (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). As such, the need for research to investigate the nature of the current and future workforce issues resulting from demographic change is of primary importance. This panel will bring together a group of expert researchers who will shed light on the nature of the LIS workforce challenges being faced, the data available to support evidence based decision making by all stakeholders and potential solutions to future workforce issues. The panelists are authors of articles being submitted for a second issue on Library Trends on the LIS workforce that has an expected publication date of December 2010. A summary of the panel presentations follows:

Larra Clark, Senior Project Officer, ALA Office for Research & Statistic

Academic and Public Librarian Salaries and Library Staffing Expenditures Trends, 2000-2009

Library salaries/wages and benefits expenditures consume as much as 80% of some library operating budgets. The impact of low or negative-growth budgets, and the displacement of technology expenditures to other categories of library operating (e.g., collections, programming, outreach), are significant for many libraries. Relying on national surveys of academic libraries from the National Center for Education Statistics, surveys of public libraries from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and annual salary surveys from the American Library Association (ALA) and ALA-Allied Professional Association, this article will describe for the period 2000-2009 the distribution of academic and public library expenditures, present librarian salary survey ranges by type of library and position held, and elucidate trends identified from comparison of the three data sources.

Joyce Ray, Associate Deputy Director for Library Services and Carlos Manjarraz. Associate Deputy Director for Research and Statistics, IMLS

Library Workforce Needs and the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program

The first section of the paper will examine the size and projected demand for librarians in the United States.   Estimates of the size of profession by type and area will draw on several data sources, including: Census' Current Population Survey, the Bureau of Labor Statistic's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, National Center for Educational Statistics' Academic and School Library surveys and the Institute of Museum and Library Services' (IMLS) Public Library Survey.   Data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages and the Public Library Survey contain enough observations for analysis at the MSA or county levels. The other data will be analyzed at the national or state levels. This section will also review recent demand projections made by the Bureau of Labor

Statistics and the academic research community. The workforce analysis from the first section of the paper provides a point of departure for discussing IMLS' Laura Bush 21st (LB21) Century Librarian Program, which supports training initiatives that range from pre-professional to doctoral programs, in addition to research and programs to build Institutional capacity. In the second section we will summarize the program's goals, provide descriptive statistics profiling LB21 grantees and highlight promising developments in library and information science education and practice.

Joanne Gard Marshall, Professor, School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

What can we learn from our graduates: Designing and testing a shared alumni survey

The goal of the Workforce Issues in Library and Information Science 2 (WILIS 2) study is to design and test a shared alumni tracking system that all LIS programs can potentially use. This IMLS funded project employs a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach in which LIS program administrators, researchers and other stakeholders jointly engage in all aspects of research process (e.g., survey development, report design, sustainability). CBPR is "a collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings" (Israel, et. al., 1998)

The study includes a web-based survey of recent graduates of 42 participating LIS programs in North America. Data collection is currently ongoing, and 61% of ALA accredited programs are participating. The first phase of the WILIS 2 survey of recent graduates (8 programs) had a response rate of 54%. The data collection for the second phase (20 programs) has just been completed with a response rate of 45%. Supplementary funding from IMLS has supported the inclusion of another 16 programs, and their survey will launch in the Spring of 2010. The methodology includes web-based survey with an email invitation and three email reminders. The survey focuses on the educational and work histories of the respondents, continuing education needs, satisfaction with LIS as a career, perspectives of recent graduates about their LIS programs and entry into the workforce and demographics.

This paper will discuss the use of the CBPR approach in designing the WILIS 2 model, present the results of the survey from all three phases and summarize the feedback from the participating programs on using the recent graduate's survey. The increased interest of LIS programs in surveying their alumni and the enthusiastic response of the phase 1 programs to the receipt of their datasets and results suggest that sustaining the model and sharing the data are the essential next steps in the program of research.

Jennifer Craft Morgan, Associate Director for Research, UNC Institute on Aging and Susan Rathbun-Grubb, Assistant Professor, School of Library and Information Science, University of South Carolina

Supporting and Sustaining Future LIS Workforce Research

The need for an evidence-base to inform LIS workforce and education planning is clear. However, few LIS researchers have the support and capacity to collect, analyze, and sustain systematic and methodologically rigorous studies. One way to support this effort is to build shared repositories and analytic tools to increase the

capacity of LIS researchers to build upon previous studies. WILIS 3 is an IMLS-funded project designed to sustain the WILIS career tracking model for LIS graduates through data sharing. WILIS 3 has the potential to offer real-time access to critical workforce and education planning data and to offer benchmarking capabilities that together have the potential to inform LIS program decision-making. The WILIS 3 project will build on WILIS 1, a comprehensive study of career patterns of graduates of LIS programs in North Carolina, and WILIS 2, a study designed to develop career tracking model that all LIS programs can potentially use. The goals of the WILIS 3 project are to 1) create publicly accessible de-identified datasets from the WILIS studies; 2) develop an interactive program-specific data system that will enable LIS programs to explore their own data and benchmark with other programs; and 3) produce a best practices toolkit for data archiving that can be used by other researchers. The products of WILIS 3 will provide a rich source of comparative and longitudinal data for LIS stakeholders and can serve as a model for other studies who want to share their own data more widely. The study will also explore ways to support complementary access to other relevant LIS datasets such as the ALISE statistical reports.