TSD Round Table Discussion: Technical Service, Public Service, and Other Duties as Assigned: Gracefully Juggling Multiple Roles within the Library

August 8, 2011
McDaniel College

Facilitated by Mary Wilson and Jessica Nhem
18 Attendees

Various Roles of Attendees:

• Reference
• Circulation
• Technical Services
• Collection Development
• Periodicals
• Instruction
• Acquisitions
• Cataloging
• Liaisons to the faculty
• Inter-library Loan
• Archives
• Student/Volunteers
• Supervision
• Branch/Other Location

Highlights:

• Tend to be more reactive than proactive
• Doing more with less is universal
• “No such thing as a bibliographic emergency”
• Hard to find relevant training
• Technical Services seems to get sent everything other departments do not know what to do with
• “Hey, everyone come to the library” but then do not have staff or money for resources

General Discussion:

• How to handle other responsibilities/development (meetings, recertification...) on top of job duties
• Does the type of library influence the roles
• Possibility of Job Sharing or Cross training
• How to Gracefully give up tasks
  o Ask what can be given up
  o When given new tasks/projects ask the individual assigning the task “I can do this, but what would you like me to drop”
  o Let supervisors know when giving new projects others may not be able to be completed
  o Sometimes need to push back
• Keep Lists
• How to get higher-ups to understand
• Some things are time sensitive and can not be pushed back
  o Money/bills can not be flexible
• Staffing
  o All libraries are lacking staff
• Tend to be more reactive than proactive
• How much more can you take on?
With less staff and no more people to pass on to
• Doing more with less is universal
• Helps if you trust and like the people you work with
  o Makes it more seamless
• “No such thing as a bibliographic emergency”
  • Keep weekly/monthly reports of what is done
    o Books cataloged, ILL, processing, Cart ordering
    o Extra work, but worth it for the information

Professional Development
• To move up/promotions outside professional training is needed
  o Usually not TS focus
• Training often depends on costs
• Short discussions can be helpful
• Hard to find relevant training

TS Role in the Institution
• Technical Services seems to get sent everything other departments do not know what to do with
• There is a TS Curse
  o Behind the scenes so not appreciated until something goes wrong
  • Informing staff of new acquisitions can be a PR option
    o Emailing monthly lists
• Catalogers may not interact with staff and faculty
• Faculty may depend on library to keep track of what is ordered

TS Processes
• With Rush requests you may have to drop everything to work on
  o Do not accept rush requests once materials are in processing
  o An issue when a DVD is needed to show in class
  o Adjunct needs
  • Put notes/important information when ordering so the cataloger is aware
• Try not to duplicate tasks
• Is it beneficial to show On Order/Processing in the catalog
• Some materials can come shelf ready from vendor
• Meeting/training of staff and faculty on the processes

Weeding
• How to best handle weeding
  o What to do with Discards
  • A continual book sale at Circ
    o Can be handled by students
• Need to be careful when throwing away books
  o People get upset when they see books in the trash
  o “Throwing away books as a sin”
  o Sometimes things need to go
  • Some rescue groups will pick up materials

Who can help?
• Friends Groups
• Discards: Better World Books or Baltimore Reads
• Kent County uses a free shredding service
Donations

- Journal donations can be difficult
- Sometimes people just want us to throw away materials for them
- Keep in mind priorities
- Try to have a holding area

Donation Receipts/Acknowledgment

- Add a line with donation information about “materials become property of the library”
- Who has the responsibility of sending the letter of acknowledgement for donations
- Is it for all items donated or only what is added to the collection
- Only give credit for what is added to the collection
  - Even if items are not added to the collection they could still benefit the library (book sales)
- At UMES the letter comes from the Dean’s desk

- Keep statistics for donations
- Policy/Guidelines
  - Some libraries must accept all donations
  - Appraisals must be done before donations
- Are there different rules for public or academic

Student Volunteers

- How to train
- How to keep
- Offer the ability to make their own schedule
- TS offers a flexible schedule that other departments can not (like circulation)
- Internships

Job Sharing/Cross training

- Does other staff know what is involved in your job?
- Some people are intimidated by Technical Services
- What if only one person knows how to do things?
  - Need cross-training if you lose that one person
- Don’t have time to cross-train
- If trained once and not done regularly the information could be lost
- Hard to keep trainees and training documentation up to date with changes

- Keep documents/wiki with instructions of tasks
  - Required to update every Fiscal Year
  - Part of SOP
  - Part of Job Description

- Worry about skill level of trainees
  - What if they mess up
  - How much do you want them to do

- Can be more problematic to fix their mistakes
- Rotate Staff
  - Go from Circ to ILL...
  - Receiving and Invoicing
  - Circ to Reference to Cataloging

Increasing Library Usage

- Allowing food/drinks may bring more into the library
- The library becomes the “family room”
  - Students come to relax (with food)
  - Have quiet rooms, talking rooms
- 24/7 during finals
• How to draw in customers during an everyday basis
• “Hey, everyone come to the library” but then do not have staff or money for resources

E-material Discussion:
• What is a workflow with E-book ordering
• If you do not see things they tend to be put on the back burner
• Will libraries die because of E-materials
• Towson
  o Receives big loads with consortium
  o Activate through SFX
• Hard to find provider neutral record
  • Are the records included in the catalog
    o Helps students find them
    o More steps for catalogers
• How to tell item is an E-book easily
  o Can be hard to tell item is an E-book with the GMD at the end of the title
• Cumbersome
• Need to include
  o Item Number
  o Link in record 956
• Removing
  o When removing must delete form OCLC and SFX
  o Download monthly batches of what is no longer active
  o Check links to make sure still active
  o Remove no longer accessible links or wait for a student to tell you
• E-book and physical book on the same record
  o Towson does not
  o Need a USMAI policy
• Material Request
  o If available in E-format must check that out
  o Won’t buy physical item if have it as an E-book
  o Hard to explain holdings and scarcity
    • Customer Service Issue explaining rights and licenses
• Purchasing
  o Can be hard to order individual books with vendors
  o May be maintenance fees (with print you buy it and its yours)
  o Buy package vs individual books
  o Pay attention to license and agreements
• McDaniel is researching cost of E-books
• Budget
  o Can be hard to budget with fees
    o UMBC set it up as a serials budget
    o Where do the maintenance fee funds come from
• WMPL has Credo Reference
• Public Libraries have E-marketing coming this year, but nothing in place now

Other Topics Mentioned:
• The Baltimore Hebrew Collection is now housed at Towson
• Academic TS positions are not tenured in all schools
  o UMBC has permanent status
  o Depends on institution
At the end of the day, no solutions but tips and nice to hear you aren’t alone with issues