



A BIMONTHLY REPORT ON RESEARCH LIBRARY ISSUES AND ACTIONS FROM ARL, CNI, AND SPARC

DIVERSITY IN THE US ARL LIBRARY WORKFORCE

by Kaylyn Hipps, Managing Editor, Web Content, ARL

To thrive in increasingly diverse scholarly and learning communities, research libraries need a diverse workforce of professionals, especially leaders. Although there appears to have been some modest progress toward the goal of diversifying the professional research library workforce over the past 20 years—demonstrated by increased percentages of minority librarians and minority managers, including library directors—ethnic and racial minorities remain underrepresented among ARL librarians.

Each year, the ARL Salary Survey collects and publishes data on the number of ethnic and racial minorities in a range of professional positions in US ARL university libraries. This article uses data from the 1985–86 and 2005–06 Salary Surveys in an attempt to identify changes in the distribution of minority professionals in ARL libraries.¹

The professional workforce in US ARL university libraries has become somewhat more diverse over the past two decades, although it has not kept pace with the nation's growing diversity. From 1985–86 to 2005–06, the percentage of librarians in US ARL university libraries who are minorities increased from 10% to 13%, the percentage of library directors who are minorities grew from 2% to 5%, and the percentage of all managerial librarians who are minorities rose from 7% to 9%. In comparison, the US Census Bureau reports that minorities made up approximately 30% of the country's population in 2000 and that percentage was expected to remain stable through 2005.²

As might be expected due to the overall increase in minorities as a percentage of total librarians, every job category except "Other" experienced growth in minorities as a percentage of the total. The greatest increases in minorities occurred in the job categories

of Subject Specialist (from 14% to 20% minority), Functional Specialist (from 7% to 13% minority), and Department Head (from 6% to 10% minority).

A comparison of the distribution of positions held by minorities in US ARL university libraries with that of whites shows signs of change as well. The distributions of job types within the minority librarian population and within the white librarian population are more similar to each other in 2005–06 than they were in 1985–86. The job categories that differed the most in 1985–86 in terms of their concentration within each population were Cataloging and Department Head: 26% of minority librarians worked in Cataloging while only 16% of white librarians did so and, conversely, only 13% of minority librarians were Department Heads while 22% of white librarians held this position. In 2005–06, the differential in the Department Head category has narrowed quite a bit: the percentage of minority librarians who are Department Heads remains at 14% but that of white librarians has fallen to 19%. And in 2005–06, only one job category has a differential wider than Department Head: 19% of minority librarians are Subject Specialists while only 11% of white librarians hold that position.

In the past 20 years, US ARL university libraries have seen a large overall decrease in numbers of Catalogers (a 30% decline from 1985–86) and an even greater increase in Functional and Subject Specialists (a 286% increase and a 45% increase, respectively). However, the overall decrease in Catalogers does not explain why a higher percentage of minorities than whites have shifted out of cataloging. And while both populations have shifted toward Functional Specialist positions in similar quantities, the increase in Subject Specialists is seen largely in the minority population. The overall redistribution of the professional

workforce in ARL libraries does not entirely explain the redistribution of the minority workforce.

While the distribution of positions within the minority and white populations appears to be growing more similar, differences certainly remain, especially in managerial positions. In 1985–86, 23% of minority librarians held managerial positions (from Department Head on up through Director) and 37% of whites held managerial positions. In 2005–06, the percentage of minorities in managerial positions remains at 23% while that of whites fell to 33%—there is less of a gap between the two but there is a gap nonetheless. It will be interesting to track this comparison over the coming years; Stanley Wilder notes that ARL libraries have been reporting more minority “new hires” in recent years³—consequently, if the libraries retain these employees, there should be a growing pool from which to promote minority managers.

¹ Although the group (and number) of ARL member libraries reporting Salary Survey data has changed somewhat since 1985, this analysis is concerned with the librarian population in ARL libraries as that membership stood at any given point in time; in this sense, this is not a statistically pure study. Additionally, this analysis is limited to university libraries in the US because those are the only ARL member libraries that report data by ethnicity/race categories.

² US Census Bureau, “Annual Estimates of the Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic or Latino Origin for the United States: April 1, 2000, to July 1, 2005,” (Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, May 2006), <http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/NC-EST2005/NC-EST2005-03.xls>.

³ Stanley J. Wilder, *Demographic Change in Academic Librarianship* (Washington, DC: ARL, 2003): 34.

A NOTE ABOUT MINORITIES’ SALARIES

The average salary for all professionals in US ARL university libraries is currently 9% higher than that for minority professionals (\$62,487 compared to \$57,488). This gap has widened considerably since 1985–86, when it was 1% (\$29,470 compared to \$29,084). Some of this growing differential may be due to differences in years of experience: the current population of minority professionals is skewed toward the low end of the years-of-experience curve, while the 1985–86 population was skewed toward the high end. Geography could also explain some of the difference: minority professionals in ARL libraries are disproportionately distributed around the US and salaries differ significantly by region. But geography and years of experience do not appear to explain the difference in salary entirely. For more on this topic, see Martha Kyrillidou, “Salary Trends Highlight Inequities—Old and New,” *ARL Bimonthly Report*, no. 208/209 (Feb./April 2000): 11, http://www.arl.org/newsltr/208_209/saltrend.html.

DISTRIBUTION OF PROFESSIONALS IN US ARL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, 1985–86 AND 2005–06

	Minorities and Whites within Each Position				Positions within Minority and White Populations			
	1985–86		2005–06		1985–86		2005–06	
	Minority	White	Minority	White	Minority	White	Minority	White
Director	2%	98%	5%	95%	0%	2%	1%	1%
Assoc./Asst. Director	5%	95%	6%	94%	3%	5%	3%	6%
Branch Head	9%	91%	10%	90%	7%	8%	5%	7%
Department Head	6%	94%	10%	90%	13%	22%	14%	19%
Subject Specialist	14%	86%	20%	80%	14%	10%	19%	11%
Functional Specialist	7%	93%	13%	87%	5%	7%	22%	22
Reference	11%	89%	14%	86%	19%	17%	19%	17%
Cataloging	16%	84%	17%	83%	26%	16%	12%	9%
Other	10%	90%	8%	92%	13%	12%	5%	7%
TOTAL	10%	90%	13%	87%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Calculations made using data from: *ARL Annual Salary Survey 1985* (Washington DC: ARL, 1986): Tables 16 and 19; *ARL Annual Salary Survey 2005–06* (Washington DC: ARL, forthcoming): Tables 21 and 27.