

St. Petersburg Jr. College reorganizes for the '90s

By Susan Anderson and Joyce Burkhardt

Library leadership succeeds with cooperation and support

At St. Petersburg Junior College (SPJC), each librarian became a leader in the library, on campus, and at the college through a restructuring of the library staff and implementation of a statewide automated library system. The college, founded in 1927, is one of the oldest junior/community colleges in the country. For years it had one campus served by a growing library. When the community college movement flourished in the 1960s, the college expanded to a second campus, then a third. By 1990 the college had four independent libraries and a separate library Technical Processing Department, each organized and administrated as different units. Leadership was from the top down in the traditional fashion with a library director or head librarian at each site. On the larger campuses, departments such as circulation or serials were headed by a librarian who was at the top of a second pyramid of management. Leadership focused on departmental issues. Units operated in isolation and intercampus relationships were competitive.

Flattening the organization

The change from manual systems to an automated statewide library system serving 28 colleges, as well as the retirement of several key librarians at SPJC, presented an opportunity to organize the libraries into one unit and to offer library staff new avenues for leadership through a "flattened" organizational model.

The move from campus library directors or managers to one director and a central library administration came at a time when technol-

ogy was available to simplify procedures and reduce duplication. Budgeting, purchasing, and related record keeping became the responsibility of one office instead of many. Instead of five separate budgets, there is one collegewide library budget. Instead of six separate payroll certifications there is one, and the information for that one is communicated electronically from the campuses to the library administrative office. Long-range planning is a major activity of the library director, who must view all of the libraries as a whole and yet maintain the unique characteristics and strengths of each one. Coordination of the efforts of all library staff to improve library services throughout the college is the primary task of the director.

This transition from several decentralized libraries to a unified system necessitated patience, good humor, and staff cooperation. The project had some early failures, such as a team-building workshop that left some library staff, who had never met each other before, puzzling over spending a day together playing games. Nevertheless, other staff worked diligently examining periodical holdings' lists for duplication, developing a collegewide library handbook, writing a collegewide library policy and procedure manual, and sharing ideas that were once jealously guarded.

During this transitional phase, a representative from each campus library and the library director met as a team on a regular basis. These "librarians-in-charge" made the decisions that resulted in coordinated and consistent library services collegewide. Each success built trust, and the promise of automated libraries was the carrot that kept all of the staff progressing.

Library automation seldom means that fewer staff are needed, rather the type of staff and the experience and training required change.

As frequently happens during automation, no new staff, with the exception of a collegewide library director, were hired. When the libraries at SPJC were automated and reorganized, the tasks ahead had to be assumed by the librarians and staff already there.

Leadership opportunities abound

Opportunities for library leadership were abundant as automation became a reality. Without a systems librarian to coordinate activities, a campus librarian was selected to supervise each automation subsystem as it was implemented collegewide. The success of each part of the automation project depends on the leadership of an individual librarian. One librarian became the "leader" of the circulation system, another the "leader" of the serials module, still another took the "lead" for organizing the barcoding project. Library staff now depend on the decisions of a librarian who might not be on their campus and who is not even the traditional head of the library.

A management theory with significance for libraries is the reengineering concept presented by Michael Hammer and James Champy in *Reengineering the Corporation: A Manifesto for Business Revolution* (HarperCollins, 1993). They

build on the ideas of quality management and customer service: "It means forgetting how work was done in the age of the mass market. . . . old job titles and old organizational arrangements—departments, divisions, groups, and so on—cease to matter. . . . What matters . . . is how we want to organize work today, given the demands of today's markets and the power of today's technologies." Reengineering rewards creativity, flexibility, individualism, and a willingness to change, which should be the hallmarks of today's libraries.

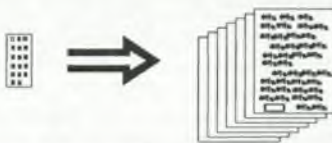
Leading the team

The next transition in library management was to align the college libraries into two teams. Instead of a "lead" librarian at each campus library, a librarian was selected to lead a North County team and a second to lead a South County team. The reasons that led to the development of these teams were 1) a need to provide college trained library staff at all sites at all times, and 2) a need to further reduce the management responsibilities of staff at the smaller libraries.

A large library was paired with one or more smaller libraries so staff could be cross-trained and staff substitutions could be more efficiently

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made. Automation provided consistency of procedures, but familiarity with layout and users of each library was still needed. Cross-training involves reassigning staff to different campuses for days, weeks, or even sessions. During this time, the number of librarians at SPJC was further reduced as a result of retirements and resignations. Budget constraints placed these positions on hold. Reducing the management responsibilities of campus librarians to focus their work on reference service and instruction was a long-term goal of the reorganization. With the long-term goal and the short-term necessity in mind, management duties such as staff scheduling and adjunct librarian recruitment for all campuses were assigned to the North and South County team leaders. These two leaders also assumed mentoring duties for new librarians as they were hired. Librarians on the smaller campuses are regularly assigned time on larger campuses to reduce isolation and to emphasize the idea of a collegewide library system.

The success of the new SPJC library rests on teamwork, which operates on all levels. For example, the management responsibilities of the librarian who is in charge of day-to-day operations of a site library will vary depending on the size of the facility. However, at each site this librarian spends the majority of time involved in areas of public service, which include reference work, instruction, and circulation. As a result, the librarian is not solely behind the scenes and is able to stay in direct contact with all aspects of library operations, aware of problems first-hand and both visible and accessible to every patron. Librarians not involved in site management have varied responsibilities as well. With at least half their time devoted to public services, they also provide the leadership for behind-the-scenes activities like serials and collection development.

Ambassadors of the library

Each librarian is a library liaison to several academic programs, takes part in book and journal selection, and delivers library instruction as part of ongoing duties. On campus, librarians are encouraged to serve on committees, act as club sponsors, and take advantage of opportunities to interact with faculty from other departments. Not constrained by the library walls or the exclusive assignment of one department, they move about their campuses as ambassadors of the library and its services.

Leadership does not end with librarians. The talents and skills of support staff also surface during times of management change. Early in the reorganization process, each support staff member completed a job analysis and opportunities for increased efficiency were identified. (Still to be accomplished is a restructuring of these staff positions.) Like the librarians, all support staff have public contact through work at the circulation desk or other public service areas. Each works in one or more other areas in the library like acquisitions, serials, audiovisuals, and book repair, and at some sites are cross-trained in all, enabling them to serve as backups in case of sickness or vacations.

Reassessing the skills of support staff

Support staff have assumed new roles and responsibilities that cut across and diminish the traditional chain of command. As cutbacks reduced the number of budgeted professional librarians, there was a significant shift upward in the level of responsibility assumed by support staff. Paraprofessionals took on jobs formerly performed by librarians. Notably, the library assistant, at one location, manages classroom and library audiovisual equipment selection, maintenance, and repair collegewide. As part of his work, this paraprofessional oversees the contracts to repair vendors, schedules the pickup and return of equipment for repair at all campuses, and makes certain the equipment is returned to the classroom—all accomplished from one site by one paraprofessional providing collegewide leadership for two audiovisual technicians who, in turn, serve all sites.

Acquisitions clerks on the two largest campuses are now charged with inputting orders from smaller campuses. All library materials arrive at campus libraries completely processed, cataloged, and ready for shelving because these services are now centralized through technical services (the Library Processing Center or LPC). Also, LPC staff print and distribute overdue notices for all campuses. Because support staff are encouraged to define their own jobs, it is not surprising that the idea to eliminate a backup CD-ROM catalog and to streamline printing of labels came from support staff at LPC. At their request, the shelvist closed July 1, 1995, and all card production ceased.

Because the ability to use computers does not necessarily depend on prior education, some library support staff members are more adept at computer skills than librarians. And,

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because only a small number of staff could receive state-provided training as each automation subsystem was implemented, support staff who had to have the training to operate the circulation system or input serials records are now more knowledgeable about certain parts of the automation system than librarians.

Consolidation leads to greater efficiency

Support staff also identified areas where efficiency needed to increase. For example, one campus library operated two circulation areas—one for audiovisuals and reserves and another for circulating books. Complaints from support staff about lack of student workers to serve these desks led to group meetings and the eventual combination of the two areas into one streamlined circulation area.

Interlibrary loan (ILL) was formerly done at each campus with librarians accessing OCLC and fulfilling requests. The Circulation Team suggested centralizing the service at one library, and assigning the duties to support staff who could communicate via e-mail with the other campuses, maintain all records at one site, access and respond to OCLC requests, and mail materials. The experiment has reduced duplication and time involved in ILL and is a direct

result of collegewide library staff working together to solve a problem creatively.

Circulation clerks simplified receipts and record keeping, eliminated many forms, developed e-mail procedures, and identified materials that could be self-serve rather than reserve. For example, all videotapes for telecourses had been handled individually by circulation staff. Loss did not increase significantly when staff suggested moving videotapes to the circulating collection. In each case, the success of these changes resulted from the involvement, ownership, and leadership of the library staff. Secretaries have expanded their roles from keyboarders and telephone answerers to those of computer troubleshooters and circulation managers. Even entry-level clerical staff are empowered to take charge of clearly defined areas of responsibility, with an end product of personal job satisfaction and a feeling of involvement.

A new form of evaluation

Reorganizing library management and changing the roles of librarians and support staff invalidates old methods of evaluation. Until last year, the librarian evaluation was a brief checklist, so generic it was used by the college for both librarians and counselors, and so brief and limited in scope that it was virtually useless.

In contrast, the performance appraisal tool designed in 1994 (see next page) by the librarians themselves provides opportunities for both self and supervisory evaluations and goal-setting in specific areas of responsibility. The evaluation is broken down into four categories:

1) Effectiveness as a Librarian. Areas evaluated include delivery of instruction, preparation of pathfinders and other written materials, public service, supervision, material selection, and communication with other faculty in and outside the library.

2) Attitude Toward Students, Faculty, and Staff. This category includes the ability to use tact and sensitivity, work effectively, follow through on research requests, facilitate use of library resources, and provide service helpfully, positively, and enthusiastically to all users.

3) Professional Growth and Development. In this section are appraisals of professional ability to follow rules and procedures; keep current with new developments in the profession, the college, and the community; attend conferences and workshops; use all appropriate tools and technologies in the delivery of services; and display willingness to undertake new assignments.

4) Contribution to Institutional Effectiveness. The last heading covers the areas of contributions toward developing and achieving annual library objectives, demonstrations of professional behavior, and participation in collegewide committees and projects.

All categories include an evaluation of goals set in the previous year, self-assessment, supervisor's rating, goals for the upcoming year, and comments. Although the form has only been in use for a year, it has already afforded some notable opportunities for self-scrutiny and interaction between supervisors and librarians.

Expanding instructional roles

Within the last five years of library restructuring, librarians have greatly expanded their instructional role at the college. At the largest campus alone, the number of one-time bibliographic instructions has doubled from fewer than 100 to nearly 200 annually. The library developed an active campaign to interest and involve faculty in the library. A conscious decision was made to bring the library to the attention of administration and staff. When librarian-liaisons are appointed to the various academic programs, their mission is to

strengthen ties by attending departmental meetings, to work with faculty on book and journal selection, and to promote the usefulness of bibliographic instruction, no matter the discipline.

The library developed a "menu" of instructional options that reflect the latest technologies and teaching methods. For many years, instruction in the library consisted exclusively of straggling pilgrimages through the building known euphemistically as "tours" and dry monologues (accompanied by yellowing transparencies) known as research instructions. Taking advantage of online and CD-ROM services, and a required course in methods of college teaching for all new faculty, bibliographic instruction has become the most visible example of the instructional leadership of libraries. With a computer and an LCD panel, campus librarians present dynamic, customized, interactive instructions that can cover as many of the electronic databases as an assignment requires, as well as look at all aspects of the library's extensive online catalog. An addition to library service that has solidified the librarian as leader has been the development and success of a credit course in the use of electronic databases in doing research. LIS 1002, "Electronic Access to Information," has been offered on several campuses, team-taught to showcase the varying strengths and interests of different librarians. The course has been so well received by students and faculty that at least one composition instructor offers extra credit for students who complete this eight-week course.

The ultimate goal is service

Library leadership can be an uncomfortable role because the leader must make public ideas, plans, and projects and take responsibility for them. Giving librarians and library support staff the opportunity for leadership is not enough. Individuals must be encouraged, self-confidence must be built, and trust must be established. At SPJC, restructuring library management and services and implementing an automated system were the impetus and opportunity for increased leadership by individual staff members. In the new SPJC libraries, traditional job descriptions and areas of responsibility break down as all staff work to meet the goals of service to users. Library leadership succeeds at SPJC because library staff embrace change, realize the need for cooperation and support, and give each other the courage to lead.

**ST. PETERSBURG JUNIOR COLLEGE
LIBRARIAN PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

Name of Librarian _____

Campus/Site _____

Academic Year _____

This form will be completed by the librarians prior to their annual performance evaluation. The performance evaluation is a two part process. Librarians will first do a performance self-evaluation for each category and set specific goals they want to achieve in the upcoming year relative to each category. Supervisors will also evaluate each faculty member and discuss goals they would like the faculty member to achieve. Below is the performance evaluation scale that should be used. Any rating of 1 or 2 must be addressed in the comments section.

5 - Excellent	4 - Above Average	3 - Satisfactory	2 - Needs Improvement	1 - Unsatisfactory
1. Effectiveness in role as a librarian				
1.1 Has achieved previous goals effectively	1	2	3	4 5
1.2 Prepares and delivers bibliographic instruction effectively	1	2	3	4 5
1.3 Produces pathfinders and the written	1	2	3	4 5
1.4 Provides effective reference and other public	1	2	3	4 5
1.5 Supervises support staff as assigned effectively, positively, and professionally	1	2	3	4 5
1.6 Participates actively in selection of library materials	1	2	3	4 5
1.7 Maintains and fosters communication with colleagues in the library and other academic departments.	1	2	3	4 5
1.8 Completes assignments promptly and accurately	1	2	3	4 5

Supervisor: _____

Librarian: _____

Comments: _____