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Creating Effective Staff Development Committees: A Case Study

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the role of Staff Development Committees (SDC) in the motivation, morale and education of library staff by relying on previous research and by using Utah State University's (USU), Merrill-Cazier Library SDC as a case study.

Design/methodology/approach – Discussion and analysis emerge from the documented formation of USU's SDC, including its membership, goals, and evaluative practices, especially as it relates to current research in this area. Informal staff comments regarding benefits and limitations of the committee are included.

Findings – Staff development has been approached from various perspectives. Most programs form as the results of formal or informal needs assessments. Goals for the program, or for the resulting staff development committee, vary and fluctuate depending on the time-specific needs of the library. Successful elements of USU's SDC include its emphasis on building inter-departmental relationships and its ability to elicit feedback from every level of the library. Challenges include having clearly defined goals and meeting a variety of individual and institutional needs through the creation of related events and activities.

Practical implications – This paper provides ideas on forming a staff development committee, including examples for specific events and activities. It details how to structure membership and explores literature relating to designing and implementing institutional goals for staff development.

Originality/value – Many studies lack a comprehensive literature review that focuses on the scope and purpose of Staff Development Committees. Our paper combines a literature review with an explanation of how USU's Library created a Staff Development Committee to fill certain library-wide goals, including challenges and benefits that emerged as a result.

Keywords – staff development, professional development, inter-departmental relationships, academic libraries

Paper type – Case Study

Introduction

Libraries face a host of new challenges, among them finding ways to stay relevant in the

Information Age. Libraries are required to do more with less, and the skills library

professionals need continue to evolve. Ward describes an Information Engineer as

someone who must have skills in "human communication and information behavior,"

"information resources," "information management," "multimedia systems,"

"information retrieval," "interface design," "multimedia programming," "hypertext

and hypermedia," "distributed systems and product development and marketing"

(1999). During times of tightened budgets and continuing staff reductions, cultivating

staff and promoting training that targets this multitude of diversified skills is a difficult

task. According to Avery, Dahlin and Carver, "Staff development and continuing

education will begin to take their places among the most strategically urgent activities

in which libraries and the librarian profession engage" (Avery *et al.*, 2001).

Many universities have responded to the need for staff education [or support] by

forming professional development committees or staff development committees, which

is the case with the Merrill-Cazier Library at Utah State University (USU). While the

focus of such committees varies, they usually relate directly to the needs of the university. USU's Staff Development Committee (SDC) has found success in meeting its goals, particularly in providing opportunities for cross-department communication and collaboration. This paper discusses the challenges of promoting staff development and provides details about USU library's approach to meeting these challenges and creating and promoting activities that help staff maintain the relationships and skills required for today's library.

Literature Review

The literature is extensive regarding staff development committees' purpose, implementation and evaluation. Many institutions create SDCs that rely on staff for input as an essential aspect of the committee. According to Creth, "The greatest opportunity for success in any academic library lies with the staff" (2004). Reasons for the implementation of these programs, or committees, vary depending on needs assessment, size of the library, scope, and commitment to goals.

The terms staff development, professional development and staff training are often used interchangeably. Zepeda offers a definition of successful professional development within the context of school improvement, which includes a number of elements that are relevant to schools and to libraries. Some of those elements include collaborative planning by those who assist in the development, significant time and resources, focus on personal and institutional improvement and capacity for long-term

maintenance (2008). Staff training is defined as implementing programs to improve

overall employee performance in order to be more innovative as an organization and

try new things, and to "[bridge] a gap between present and desired performance"

(Saponaro *et al.*, 2009). Others define staff development as "change in individual's

knowledge, understanding, behaviors, skills – and in values and beliefs" (Southwest

Educational Development Laboratory, 1994). All of these definitions are broad and

overlapping, which is the case with the use of the term in this paper. The best way to

understand an organization's definition of any of these terms is to identify the scope of

the committee. Most library goals fall within one of these broad categories – staff

development, professional development and staff training. The implementation of

many of the programs described in the literature incorporate elements of all three. The

success of all of them is dependent on the organization's ability to meet their defined

goals.

Inspiring staff to take part in achieving the goals of such committees and

programs and ensuring that they have the skills and support necessary for success is

difficult. Creth explains that if librarians wish to have some influence on the committee

to guide programming and other library initiatives, then administration must first

examine the culture of the library (2004). For most universities, addressing the culture

and values takes the form of a formal or informal needs assessment. Needs range from

teaching specific skills to staff, such as public service or technological training, to

building communication and interpersonal skills. Many programs emerge as a response to specific problems that arise within institutions, such as conflicts between staff and faculty, or complaints from patrons about poor customer service.

Michael Straatmann emphasizes that staff development goals do not function solely to train and create resources, but that they exist to bridge the gap between paraprofessional staff and degreed librarians within academic libraries and to help repair any inequalities between the two groups (2008). Other libraries mention similar problems and an attempt to solve them with staff committees or development programs. Cardiff University offers a staff rotation program designed to handle some of the conflicts that arose due to a merger (Earney and Martins, 2009). Metzger describes a similar approach at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in the form of a cross-department exchange that encourages faculty to learn more about various departments' purposes and core services (2006). This emphasis on helping library staff embrace change in the library environment is a common one in the literature. Roberts and Wood pose the difficult problem of teaching staff to embrace change while recognizing that change itself is a constant in the workplace (2010).

For many institutions, more emphasis is placed on skills training rather than on improving communication within the institution, although most target both. Ideally, training would occur regularly for every staff member, but current budget constraints make this impossible for most libraries (Reed, 2010). While many libraries have

asserted the importance of staff training, especially training designed to help librarians keep up with evolving technology, Straatmann asserts that the changing technological environment also creates a necessity for improved interpersonal and communication skills because it can be easy for people to hide behind technology (2008). However, all institutions have limitations to time and funding that can be spent on building staff technology skills or on improving interpersonal relationships. "Given the increasingly complex information environment in which librarianship functions, what little time and effort is available for staff development is often taken up by the need to learn enough to keep up with new systems" (Westbrook, 2005).

Libraries have also found ways to improve staff and professional development despite concerns about tightened budgets. According to Rutner, staff development committees can easily operate on smaller budgets. When planning an in-house program, committees can take advantage of local resources to save money, such as inviting guest speakers from the university community and surrounding area to update staff about emerging technologies or other pertinent library issues (Rutner, 2009). Other suggestions for keeping professional development simple and low-cost include going to local conferences, attending conferences virtually, sharing information on blogs, wikis and electronic lists, volunteering locally, obtaining a mentor, staying current with library literature, and writing an article (Vicedo and Davis, 2010). Low-budget staff development activities include lunch talks, library newsletters, in-house staff-exchange

programs, journal clubs, environmental scanning, mentor programs, orientation for new employees, and participation in library-related Internet lists (Badger, 2001). The Institute of Museum and Library Services implemented a low-cost staff development committee that incorporated self-directed readings, in-person seminars, lectures and discussions, emails between learners and teachers, and assigned in-house projects for each staff member.

In spite of budget limitations, libraries recognize the importance of staff development, especially when helping staff avoid burnout. Steele notes that "recognition, or the lack of it, shows up often as a cause for burnout" (2009). To combat this, part of the purpose for some staff development programs is to reward employees and "capitalize on the educational mission of the institution by evolving into an environment that promotes and rewards staff learning" (Paster, 2004). To keep employees who have plateaued, "companies should move away from promotion-based reward systems and eliminate unnecessary layers of management to create an organizational structure that offers their employees more respect, autonomy, and challenge" (Montgomery, 2002). These aspirations often appear in the types of activities implemented and the scope of the goals set for professional and staff development programs.

Many institutions tend to integrate various types of skills training as part of the focus, or in some cases the main purpose, of staff development activities. St.

Catherine's College focuses their goals largely on the success of one training event, Library Techno Day. Training activities included how to operate Instant Messaging (IM) for a recently added reference IM service and workshops led by staff members on "communication tools of the future," such as wikis, blogs and RSS feeds (Newsome and Johnson, 2009). Reed, from Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, describes their online approach to self-paced training models for their staff (2010). Topper suggests staff development as a way to implement customer service training (2009). West Cheshire College implemented a mandatory program that is required for all Learning Resources Staff and that is conducted mainly within online forums like discussion boards and blogs. It was designed "to ensure a fundamental and substantial improvement in the comprehension of both information literacy and the functionality of [the institutional virtual learning environment] Fronter with the Learning Resources staff" (Appleton, 2010).

Denver University's Penrose Library addressed staff development needs by creating the Staff Development and Training Program. Their goal is to invoke a sense of purpose within each employee to improve interpersonal relations with the hope reducing staff turnover (Grealy *et al.*, 1996). The committee was built from a collection of departments and activities that were designed to meet their specific goals, including events that foster community and some training, such as providing classes on critical library computer applications. Attendance was optional but highly encouraged. Each

of these approaches exemplifies the dual focus that most staff development programs have and their primary emphases on professional training and improved interpersonal communication.

History and Membership of USU's SDC

Merrill-Cazier Library's addressed the issues outlined in the literature review by creating a staff development committee. A brief profile is given here to emphasize the specific role and needs of this library. Merrill-Cazier Library at Utah State University, a land grant university, houses a collection of 1.6 million volumes and approximately 11,700 print serials. It serves a population of 25,000 students, 11,000 of which are distance education or regional campus students. It currently has a staff of about 60.79 FTE employees, which includes faculty, professional, and classified staff. The library deals with many of the issues facing academic libraries today, including providing quality services to its face-to-face and distance students with fewer staff and increasing demands for resources and time. The relatively small size of Merrill-Cazier Library means communication between departments is crucial to fulfilling the library's mission statement, carrying out its vision, and upholding its values, which include "staff collaboration to enhance productivity, solve problems, and stimulate individual growth and organizational development" (Merrill-Cazier Library, 2006).

One of the factors prompting the creation of the SDC included a concern from past years that library employees weren't effectively communicating cross-

departmentally. The staff rarely worked together cohesively, likely because there were

no formal staff programs in place to promote this kind of collaboration. Librarians in

cataloging often wondered what the librarians in reference did because employees

seldom had the chance to interact. The administrative assistants worked with the

Library Director to organize an annual Staff Day. Generally, a few ideas were explored,

with little input from staff about the day's events. Staff Day consisted of a lunch

followed by an outside speaker, and was planned mainly to give staff a break from their

every day activities. One year the library invited a manager from Wendy's Restaurant

to speak about effective customer service. Another year, the USU telephone services

department spoke about effective telephone communication. The Staff Day themes

rarely involved team-building activities or opportunities for people to learn new skills.

Activities were generally seen as lacking worthwhile goals, including providing

valuable professional training opportunities or by promoting collaboration among staff.

Another staff activity previously mandated by the Library Director was Travel

Reports where staff who had attended conferences reported on their experiences. The

travel report meetings were very inconsistent, occurring twice a year and were not

linked to any formal goals. The Director first spoke about pertinent library issues,

followed by anyone who had attended a conference or meeting. Sometimes these

reports focused more on activities unrelated to any professional goals, like sightseeing.

Unfortunately, this prompted some conflict between staff and faculty about the usage of

funds for traveling and the quality of the reports, especially since staff received varying amounts of money for travel.

In response, a staff member noticed the need for improved training and communication and approached the administration. The Library decided it was time to implement a formal Staff Development Committee. SDC was officially formed in 2002, with the charge to provide opportunities for training and retention and to promote growth of employees. The decision to create such a committee came from the employees, not the administration, which set the tone for a democratic committee, where all employees could have input.

The membership established for the committee reflects its desire to have input at all levels. The charge states that, "The committee consists of eager, willing, and positive people from all departments and all job classifications (classified, professional, and faculty) among the Library employees" (SDC charge, 2002). SDC attempts to represent every employee group and each department, but this proves to be a challenge some years depending on the availability of volunteers for the committee. The committee strives to get a broad representation throughout the library so that everyone's voice is heard. The membership charge specifically states that committee members serve staggered two-year terms that are only renewable once, so that each person in the library has a chance to serve on the committee; however, the committee tends to deviate from this policy quite often. Members tend to let people stay on the

committee as long as they want if they are willing to volunteer for a longer term. The

chair of the committee is elected from among its membership to serve for one year. The

shape and goals of the committee are influenced by changing membership and by the

emphasis and personality of the chair.   Annual rotation of the chair infuses the

committee with the momentum it needs to plan fresh, innovative, and timely programs

for the year.

A member of the library administration serves on the committee in an ex-officio

capacity, which emphasizes the overall support and buy-in from administration. The

administration's role is critical to SDC's success for many reasons. Administrators'

overall support and enthusiasm for the SDC committee sends a clear message to the rest

of the library staff that it's a worthwhile committee meant to enhance the overall work

experience of every staff member and to open up the lines of communication between

departments. Without the administration's support, attendance at programs would

surely decline. The presence of the ex-officio member helps to minimize time wasted

pursuing goals that are unlikely to gain the support of administration and department

heads. The ex-officio member attains funds when needed, which is critical for the SDC

committee. The librarian serving in this role needs to be efficient and able to guide the

committee towards overall goals while still encouraging all committee members to

participate and volunteer for various tasks.

Purpose and Scope

According to the charge created by the SDC, the Staff Development Committee is

> Dedicated to the training, education, and retention of all Library employees. It
> promotes and aspires to create a collegial environment for all Library employees
> individually and for the Library as a whole. Through its programs, the
> committee aspires to promote job-oriented education and personal growth
> opportunities that enhance the performance of employees and increase the
> quality of service (SDC, 2002).

The committee's goal is to enhance staff performance, thereby providing better experiences for our patrons. In addition to promoting the development of all library employees, one of the main goals of the SDC committee is to improve inter-departmental communication by breaking down barriers between departments. Although not specifically mentioned in the charge, developing each librarian's role within the organization and fostering relationships between colleagues has been paramount to the committee's mission since inception. Many of the programs implemented by the SDC strive to incorporate teamwork so that librarians from different departments work together to solve a common problem. Part of this goal also includes giving staff opportunities to think outside the box and take risks while collaborating with their colleagues.

The committee is charged with the following duties:

- Regularly review issues and identify needs related to training and development of Library employees

- Organize and sponsor continuing education programs (minimum one per semester), which may include workshops, seminars, and activities such as Staff Day, etc.

- Arrange panel discussions, brown bags, etc. where staff will report on their participation in recent conferences and continuing education opportunities

- Arrange stress relieving activities for staff members' benefit

- Evaluate the success of staff development activities

- Hold a meeting twice a month, which is open to all Library employees

- Report annually to the Libraries Executive Council

SDC meets twice a month, typically to plan upcoming activities and discuss future goals. One of the committee's most important undertakings is to identify any new issues or needs in the library that need to be addressed relating to training and development of library employees. The committee sponsors training opportunities and strives to incorporate humor and fun activities into the majority of its events, which translates into a more enjoyable experience for the staff. For instance, when library staff moved from a private office environment to cubicles, SDC wrote and performed an exaggerated and educational cubicle etiquette skit, which included admonishments to

not "prairie dog" over the cubicle and reminders that your neighbors may not want to hear you discuss that nasty rash on the phone with your doctor. Overall, the SDC emphasizes general types of training that are applicable to the whole library. The training needs specific to each department are left to department heads to plan and implement.

The Committee offers several events a year, with the largest being the annual Staff Day. There are three components to a Staff Day program: Librarians should learn something new about the library, strengthen relationships among colleagues, and most importantly, have fun. Recent staff day themes have included everything from a carnival-like event to an afternoon of folklore and storytelling to a Library Olympics. Staff Day offers diverse activities each year and is never dominated by one person but features a variety of speakers, including outside and inside the library speakers as appropriate. In 2009 the SDC organized a Staff Day titled "Be Well, Be Safe, Be Happy," which was developed to complement a campus-wide "Be Well" program. SDC members created training materials starring our very own talent, in order to keep the staff engaged, including a hilarious, but informative trivia game on earthquake safety for the library.

Another year the SDC introduced a scavenger hunt activity, where librarians were assigned to teams with people from various departments within the library. The groups were then asked to complete various tasks as a team, such as cataloging a book

or loading a microfilm reader. These types of activities help foster relations between colleagues that spill over into other aspects of their work and gave staff a better idea of how other departments function.

The activities promoted by the SDC since its formation eight years ago have varied depending on the needs of the library at the time. Some of the events have been more training oriented, while most of them have a strong collaborative element designed to give staff opportunities to engage in ways their normal duties might not allow. For a more comprehensive list of these activities, see appendix A.

Discussion

It is difficult to determine the success of the SDC, especially since USU's SDC has conducted very little formal evaluation. Although by its nature, the committee encourages feedback, there is not a current formal assessment in place, which is a problem for many universities who promote staff development activities despite the many advantages of having an effective evaluation plan. Generally, those that conduct some kind of evaluation don't evaluate their programs the way they should (Avery *et al.*, 2001). According to Todaro, "Evaluation of staff development for libraries usually involves review, critique, and 'valuing' of presenters and content at the very least. Typically it does not include a careful appraisal and study of a staff development program including assessment of outcomes" (Todaro, 2001). Such is the case with

USU's evaluation of SDC events. Currently, the committee only evaluates the annual

Staff Day, but welcomes feedback for the other programs and activities. The SDC

reevaluated the library departmental open houses after two years of offering them, but

the reevaluation was an informal critique of the value of the activity rather than a

formal appraisal of outcomes. The reevaluation found that the open houses brought

some unforeseen, negative results: some departments wanted to 'out do' the others with

some staff planning elaborate activities and refreshments and spending too much time

on open house preparations, infringing on accomplishment of their regular work duties.

This year, the committee has decided to revisit these open houses, this time setting a

budget ($15) for each department, and a clear time limit (20-30 minutes).

Another example of informal assessment is the creation of Table Talks, which is a

revision of the earlier mentioned Travel Reports. In response to the earlier concern

about resentment over travel funds between staff and faculty, Table Talks, sponsored

by the SDC is designed to help improve communication among staff. The program

occurs twice a month and is moderately well attended. Staff members are encouraged to

attend, but it's not mandatory. Table talks sessions are meant to be a time where staff

can share their experiences and knowledge gained from conferences or workshops.

Presentations are limited to work-related, relevant activities attended by staff. A

department head commented on the benefits of Table Talks:

I really appreciate how SDC sponsors Table Talks, allowing each of us to benefit from what others learn from various conferences and other professional development opportunities. This practice of sharing workshop and conference experiences really stretches our travel dollars and saves time that might have been expended by sending multiple people to the same event. Having many opportunities to share information with colleagues also serves to bond people together and help develop speaking (and listening) skills.

Table Talks does not appear to create resentment over funds and traveling expenses, especially between staff and faculty at the library, which apparently was a result of the former Travel Reports program.

Even without formal assessment, the SDC has shown its ability to adapt activities to meet challenges that arise. Part of this success certainly relates to the membership of the committee. While the committee consists of staff at every level, administrative support of the SDC is essential to its success. Currently, the same administrator has held the ex-officio position on the committee since its formation in 2002. According to one administrator, "You need to have an administrator on the committee but that person must see the staff interaction aspect of the group and not get bogged down with the development side." The administrator plays a key role in keeping the SDC focused on the current needs of the library and in helping provide means and support for new ideas and suggestions.

Although the SDC has experienced success in meeting their goals, there are a number of continuous challenges. According to a current SDC member, "A challenge has been a perception among some that the SDC is just the entertainment committee." A former member of the committee aired a concern that the committee has become a "library entertainment and special events committee." The staff member explains his perception of the shift in the SDC's focus from promoting professional skills to the emphasizing entertainment this way: "Part of the problem is that a lot of people who work in the library view it as strictly a job, while the other (smaller) half view it as a career. Career people are going to be looking for new skills and opportunities, while job people tend to look not much further than past 5 PM."

This employee's comments reflect a few key issues regarding staff development. First, the choice to embrace opportunities, whether for skills training or to forge better working relationships with colleagues, is ultimately the responsibility and choice of each employee. Jennerich comments on this same issue: "At one end of the spectrum are staff members who are profoundly changed by what they learn, and incorporate techniques and concepts into their daily work. At the other end of the spectrum are staff members who participate minimally (or not at all) in training and development opportunities" (2006). No matter the focus of the SDC, some staff will choose to gain more from it than others will; the SDC needs to continuously take into account the variety of personal styles, interests and needs when considering events and projects. It

will never be able to cater to every employee, but it can strive to reach the most people in the areas with the greatest need at the time.

Another issue is the perception of the SDC's value and goals. Some events are more successful than others in creating meaningful opportunities that support professional training and help build relationships. Some events aren't designed to meet both goals. Depending on the membership of the SDC, particularly the goals of the person serving as chair, events and their purpose can, and probably should, fluctuate.

Conclusion

Merrill-Cazier Library places importance on developing individual staff in order to work together as a cohesive unit. Library employees need to have the critical skills to function as highly trained workers of the 21st century if they are to succeed in serving the faculty, staff, students, & community members effectively.

The SDC strives to fulfill its charge of promoting professional development activities and raising morale in the library through its diverse activities. The activities the committee sponsors reenergize staff, help to avoid staff burnout, increase productivity, help mediate change in the library, and build workplace camaraderie, which fosters more communication and better productivity. Another staff member commented on the committee's programs: "Staff at other libraries have commented to

me about how much fun we seem to have at our library and how well we all get along. I think that SDC is partially responsible for this camaraderie and positive attitude."

In order to maintain collegial relationships and to meet general training needs as they arise, the committee endeavors to stay current and solicit feedback from every level of the library. Membership continues to be a crucial element for the success of the committee as well, including the focus and personality of the head of the committee, and the ex-officio administration member's support and input. In the future, more formal evaluation may become necessary, particularly as the needs of the library change and develop, which may require that the SDC redefine its scope and purpose as needed. Like so many other areas of librarianship, the ability to change and adapt is essential to its success.

Currently, the major priority and function of the committee continues to be fostering inter-departmental relationships that encourage collaboration and understanding. This is an aspect of the library work environment that many of the staff and administration emphasize. According to one administrator,

> In my experience at USU, I have never worked with a more communal group of employees. This atmosphere at the [Merrill-Cazier] Library did not exist prior to this decade and probably is nonexistent at other academic libraries. I have talked with our colleagues around the state and they are astonished by the events and the manner in which our staff works together.

This collegiate atmosphere is evident in the types of collaboration that the library encourages: people from all departments participate in reference duties and serve as subject liaisons, members of the Reference Department help the digital department with copyright clearance for its institutional repository and help staff the reference desk in Special Collections. These partnerships are possible because the library and the SDC have worked hard to facilitate them. USU and libraries everywhere must continue to foster these kinds of relationships among staff in order to survive and stay relevant for the populations they serve. The need for collaboration has only increased as today's libraries look for new ways to find solutions to increasing demands for resources and services – staff development committees fill an important niche in accomplishing this goal.

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Appendix 1. Staff Development Activities at Utah State University's Merrill-Cazier Library		

Activity	Description	Schedule
Departmental Open Houses	Offered every few years; departments take turns hosting open houses. Departments plot and scheme creative ways to show what they do. Activities have included: "The Price is Right," Baby Picture Matching, Mission Impossible Video, and a circus theme.	2006 – first introduced to library. 2010 – committee decided to revive this library-wide activity.
First Friday Lunch	Monthly potlucks organized by one member of the committee; past themes have included Dutch Oven lunch, Fall Harvest Items, & a Chili Cook-Off.	2006 - present
Holiday Treat Exchange/Recipe Exchanges	Staff members are encouraged to bake their favorite holiday cookies in an exchange with other staff. People often trade their favorite recipes too.	2007 - present
Spotlight of the Week	Featured weekly posts highlighting new library programs, initiatives, or general information about the library pertinent to the whole staff.	Started in 2006, lasted for two years. Topics were posted to the staff intranet weekly.

Revived in 2010. One employee spotlighted weekly with a photo and |

		short essay about interests and role at the library. Spotlights are archived on the staff intranet.
Staff Day *Past themes include:* 2005: Carnival 2006: Strategic Planning 2007: Library Olympics 2008: Folklore & Storytelling 2009: Be Well, Be Safe, Be Happy 2010: Giving Back to Our Community: Volunteer Projects	Staff Day is the main SDC event. It is an annual event for all library staff. Staff Day serves three purposes: staff should learn something new about the library, strengthen relationships among colleagues, and have fun!	Started in 2002; occurs annually
Staff Day Awards	Each year the Library honors an employee from each employee class, including classified, professional, and faculty. Staff members submit nominations, describing the accomplishments of the nominee. The previous year's winners serve as the judges. Winners receive a free day of annual leave.	Started in 2000, by administration. Once the committee was formed in 2002, SDC took over its responsibilities.
Student & Staff Appreciation Day	Offered twice a year as way to honor all library employees, including students and part-time staff. The committee serves treats in the staff break room.	2004 - present
Table Talks	Anyone who has attended a conference,	2002 – used to be called Trip Reports; mandatory

	training, or workshop is asked to present a summary of their experience to the library staff. Table Talks also features special training or current awareness topics, such as new Web 2.0 technologies.	by Library Director 2004 - present: changed to Table Talks; much more supportive and relaxed atmosphere. Staff are encouraged to attend, but it is not mandatory.
Wall of Thanks	Notes of appreciation written by staff to other staff members. All supervisors receive copies of the notes for the staff in their departments.	2008 - present