Career Satisfaction of Young Archivists: Preliminary Findings

Amber Cushing, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Allison Fox, University of Redlands

Abstract:
The results of the 2004 A*CENSUS survey provided the most recent snapshot of the archival profession. Included in the action items results were a way in which to "make room" in the archival profession for new workers, in an effort not to lose them to other professions and to work to "engage younger professionals in leadership roles in organizations" and provide opportunities for growth. Career satisfaction, defined by Hoppock (1953) as any combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances that cause a person to claim job satisfaction, is an important aspect of these action items. Utilizing a two-pronged theory involving satisfaction with workplace and satisfaction with the greater profession, the survey of young archivists begins to address these action items. This poster reports the key preliminary results of a career satisfaction survey of young archivists.

Methods:
Utilizing the Herzberg et al. (1959) theory of intrinsic and extrinsic factors of job satisfaction, survey questions were designed to assess respondents' satisfaction with intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of work environment and the greater archival profession. Greater archival profession satisfaction was mainly addressed through questions related to professional associations. An invitation to participate in the thirty item internet survey was distributed to sixteen identified young archivists, five relevant listservs, and program directors of thirty-three archival education programs listed in the SAA Education directory and/or hosting a SAA student organization list. Analyses were conducted using SPSS 16.0 and NVIVO 8.

Respondents were asked what they were most satisfied with and most dissatisfied with in their current positions. Below are lists of the most frequently occurring themes.

Respondents were asked to identify the three benefits and six environmental attributes of a position which were most important to them.

The tree graph represents the two-pronged theory of career satisfaction and the questions derived thereon.

The table graph represents the two-pronged theory of career satisfaction and the questions derived thereon.

The two most common themes in response to why or why not service for SAA was desirable were "professional values" (yes), and "time commitment" (no).

Are you a member of SAA?
Yes: 63.5%
No: 23.7%
No answer: 7.5%

Have you served on a committee for SAA?
No: 83.1%
Yes: 16.9%
(Only those who claimed SAA membership saw this question)

Would you like to serve on a committee for SAA?
No: 24.7%
Yes: 29.7%
(Only those who claimed SAA membership saw this question)

The results of the 2004 A*CENSUS survey provided the most recent snapshot of the archival profession. Included in the action items results were a way in which to "make room" in the archival profession for new workers, in an effort not to lose them to other professions and to work to "engage younger professionals in leadership roles in organizations" and provide opportunities for growth. Career satisfaction, defined by Hoppock (1953) as any combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances that cause a person to claim job satisfaction, is an important aspect of these action items. Utilizing a two-pronged theory involving satisfaction with workplace and satisfaction with the greater profession, the survey of young archivists begins to address these action items. This poster reports the key preliminary results of a career satisfaction survey of young archivists.

Methods:
Utilizing the Herzberg et al. (1959) theory of intrinsic and extrinsic factors of job satisfaction, survey questions were designed to assess respondents' satisfaction with intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of work environment and the greater archival profession. Greater archival profession satisfaction was mainly addressed through questions related to professional associations. An invitation to participate in the thirty item internet survey was distributed to sixteen identified young archivists, five relevant listservs, and program directors of thirty-three archival education programs listed in the SAA Education directory and/or hosting a SAA student organization list. Analyses were conducted using SPSS 16.0 and NVIVO 8.

Future Work:
• The A*CENSUS respondent mean age was 48.8 with only 16% of respondents reporting age as 34 and under. Comparison with A*CENSUS data may highlight a youth perspective of the archival profession.
• Further statistical analysis of respondent results will lead to greater identification of contrasts and trends among results.
• A more comprehensive review of available archival literature will provide a critical background to suggest implications and propose questions for further research.

Respondents were asked to identify whether or not they are members of SAA, after which were questions determining their participation or interest in leadership and/committee work within the organization. Member totals may be affected by the unpredicted international response rate.