INTRODUCTION

While hiring committees often seek engineering information professionals who hold subject-specific knowledge, availability of qualified candidates is low. The dearth is not new, but will persist without active effort by practicing librarians.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Survey Results

A total of 120 responses were collected, representing 49% of the population. Of the 120 responses collected, the majority of respondents worked in academic libraries (21%), 14% in public libraries, 11% in corporate libraries, and 5% in government libraries.

The most common career path outside of engineering-related positions (in order of frequency) were: academic (33%), corporate (32%), public (23%), and government (12%).

DISCUSSION

The results from this survey provide evidence to support the assertion that hires in engineering librarianship degrees in LIS programs are low. Of the 120 responses collected, the majority of respondents worked in academic librarianship. Low stock of available engineers at academic libraries has been documented by Sandy, Lembo, and Manasco (1998: Hackenberg, 2000; Hackenburg & Chu, 2002). With the exception of Mosley’s 1995 study, no other studies were found that provided survey data for science and engineering librarians and found that only 15% of LIS graduates held a major in engineering.

While there are studies that look at the educational background of science and technology librarians in general and find that the majority of these librarians have some sort of background in science, engineering, chemistry, or mathematics, these studies are not specific to engineering librarianship and do not include a survey of librarians in this field. Several studies have been completed on the educational backgrounds of science and engineering librarians and found that only 15% of the LIS graduates held a major in engineering.

A survey was conducted in 1998 to examine the educational backgrounds of science and engineering librarians (Sandy, Lembo, & Manasco, 1998). The study found that 15% of LIS graduates held a major in engineering.

STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITING

• Look for students in engineering programs such as Civil, Chem, or Mechanical Engineering; give them opportunities to shadow professionals in these fields; and have them shadow students.
• Participate in Career fairs at high schools, colleges, and universities.
• Establish a relationship with the Libraries Department at your institution in order to promote the library profession; and reach out to students in Engineering programs.
• If you have an on-campus or nearby Library School, offer to present a class.

STRATEGIES FOR MENTORING

• Develop strategies for mentoring that are specific to engineering librarianship. Offer to supervise students in your area of expertise, and offer to provide mentorship opportunities.
• Trust is perhaps the most important element to create a successful mentoring relationship.

SUGGESTIONS FOR UPCOMING ENGINEERING LIBRARIANS

• Learn more about the field.
• Try to become more familiar with the job in a library setting; gain experience in various fields.
• Find an engineering mentor who you work closely with to co-present at a library school class.
• Take time to familiarize yourself with the resources of the library.
• Learn more about the field.

REFERENCES


