From the Bottom Up: Engaging Technical Services Staff in Decision-Making

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Abstract: Sweeping innovations in publishing models, shifts from print to electronic, and the expanding impact of consortia alliances have transformed technical services operations in academic libraries. Work of technical services units is transitioning from daily assignment of routine work by supervisors, to a dynamic project-based operation where both staff and management input is crucial to the success of the unit. The new environment requires all staff to actively engage in decision-making as part of a team of colleagues and managers, using evaluation, synthesis, and prioritization to meet project and operational goals. This article describes activities Eastern Washington University Libraries' Collection Services unit has undertaken to involve and empower its classified staff in decision-making and priority-setting in order to drive innovation and change within the unit and library-wide. Unit activities have included redesigning physical space, instituting summer retreats, establishing unit ground rules, and ensuring classified staff involvement in hiring. These activities have laid the groundwork for a more collaborative and empowered team of paraprofessional and professional staff able to successfully anticipate and adapt to the rapidly evolving academic library environment.

Keywords: *technical services, collaboration, management*

Introduction

Sweeping innovations in publishing models, shifts from print to electronic, and the expanding impact of consortia alliances have transformed technical services operations in academic libraries. Work of technical services units is transitioning from daily assignment of routine work by supervisors, to a dynamic project-based operation where both staff and management input is crucial to the success of the unit. The new environment requires all staff to actively engage in decision-making as part of a team of colleagues and managers, using evaluation, synthesis, and prioritization to meet project and operational goals.

This article describes activities Eastern Washington University Libraries' Collection Services unit has undertaken to involve and empower its classified staff[1] in decision-making and priority-setting in order to drive innovation and change within the unit and library-wide. Unit activities have included redesigning physical space, instituting summer retreats, establishing unit ground rules, and ensuring classified staff involvement in hiring. These activities have laid the groundwork for a more collaborative and empowered team of paraprofessional and professional staff able to successfully anticipate and adapt to the rapidly evolving academic library environment. Following a review of selected literature highlighting the changes in technical services staffing and operations over the last decade, this article provides context about Eastern Washington University Libraries' Collection Services unit and describes the activities undertaken to empower classified staff in decision-making. A reflection of outcomes and lessons learned completes the article.

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[1] *Classified staff* and *paraprofessional staff* are used interchangeably.

Literature Review

Technical services operations in libraries of all types have changed significantly in the last decade. Usually comprising cataloging, acquisitions, serials, electronic resource management, and collection development, but also possibly systems and discovery services, technical services in academic libraries have been overwhelmingly changed by technology, especially the shift from largely print-based collections to increasingly electronic collections (Davis, 2016; Gremmels, 2013; Weber, 2015; Simons, 2018). Other factors include reduced budgets, local digitization initiatives, and the stronger collection-building roles of consortia (Sandler, 2014, p. 19). These developments have significantly driven changes in technical services operations as "transformation is necessary to [academic libraries'] survival" (Simons, 2018, p. 102). This literature review focuses on general trends reported in the literature, with particular focus on shifts in types of technical services work, skills required by classified staff, organizational structures, and physical spaces.

A major trend in technical services is the shift from routine clerical work to higher-level technical work and the resulting requirements for positions in these areas. Paper-based manual processes completed by small armies of clerical support staff have given way to complex, highly-variable tasks requiring more expertise and advanced skill sets (Gremmels, 2013, p. 237; Luesebrink, 2015, pp. 67-68; Weber, 2015, p. x). The highly structured "linear path of well-defined tasks that are routine and predictable" for print resource management have increasingly shifted to the more cyclic and highly-variable nature of electronic resource management (Schmidt & Dulaney, 2014, pp. 69-70). Reassigning and retraining staff in electronic resource management tasks has occurred slowly as these areas require the development of technology-centric skill sets, such as management of non-MARC metadata and data transformation (Davis, 2016, p. 59). In addition, outsourcing of physical processing

and copy cataloging, budget and staff reductions, as well as reallocation to local digitization and

scholarly communication initiatives, have changed technical services focus and staffing levels

(Luesebrink, 2015; Weber, 2015; Zhu, 2012). As the skill level and type of work has shifted, libraries have

responded by adjusting position responsibilities, organizational structures, and physical spaces.

Changes to position responsibilities are especially relevant to the shifting territories of

professional librarian positions and paraprofessional or classified staff positions. Librarian positions

have become more administrative and strategic, while classified positions have moved from clerical,

routine work to roles traditionally in the domain of professional librarians, with the "perception that

the role of the paraprofessional is increasing in scope and intellectual caliber" (James, Shamchuk, &

Koch, 2015, pp. 9-13). "Paraprofessionals have taken on high-level complex duties that cannot be

labeled routine because those duties require special training, knowledge, and experience; high-level

creativity and originality; and good problem solving, communication, and analytical skills," leading

some researchers to speculate that future technical services units will be made up of more professional

and high-level paraprofessional positions, compared to low-level positions (Zhu, 2012, p. 141). Others

observe that as higher-level paraprofessional staff positions have assumed more complex duties,

professional librarian positions have been repurposed for other priorities or eliminated altogether

(Luesebrink, 2015, p. 70; Weber, 2015, p. xiv).

With shifts in the type of work completed in technical services units, organizational structures

have also shifted, and reorganization of technical services has become a routine and expected

occurrence (Davis, 2016, p. 61). Budget reductions and changing priorities have resulted in

consolidation or centralization of technical services, as well as mergers with previously-separate

functions, such as systems and discovery services (Aladebumoye, Ellero, & Day, 2016; Pearson & Busch,

2011; Yue, 2013). Organizations report shifting from "traditional" organizational structures based on acquisitions, cataloging, serials/e-resources, and collection development units to more flexible and adaptable structures. The University of Northern Colorado established a new organizational structure based on resource life cycle, with units for resource procurement, resource processing and description, and resource maintenance (Leffler & Newburg, 2010). The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Libraries moved to a project-based organizational structure for some of its technical services functions, allowing project staff to develop skills they were able to transfer to multiple tasks and projects as initiatives and priorities change (Laskowski & Maddox Abbott, 2016, pp. 8-9). At American University's Law Library, a shift was made to distribute e-resources functions throughout the unit, which disrupted the "hierarchical organization of positions by function" required for traditional print resource management. The infusion of e-resource management throughout the unit required staff to adapt to the cyclic and highly-evolving nature of these resources (Schmidt & Dulaney, 2014, p. 70).

Reorganizations in technical services units often result in a less hierarchical, compartmentalized unit and a more collaborative environment. While collaboration within units and across departments has been encouraged over the last couple decades (Davis, 2016, p. 59), the achievement of this goal can be elusive. Historically production-oriented, technical services work has attracted staff who are "detail-oriented, enjoy job structure, and are comfortable working independently" in "clearly defined and compartmentalized" roles (Gibson, 2016, p. 147). This results in staff not understanding the impact of their positions' tasks on the work of others in the unit or in other areas of the library (Schmidt & Dulaney, 2014, p. 70). One researcher described the implementation of teams in technical services as resulting in "pseudo-teams" where "groups of individuals [work] in a functional co-existence" (Gibson, 2016, p. 147). Significant barriers to increased collaboration between

professional and paraprofessional positions also exist. These include rigid job descriptions,

compensation rates, and promotion structures (Perini, 2015, p. 157). Investment in training and

professional development for existing staff is more critical than ever, especially as classified staff

assume complex and technical tasks associated with electronic resource management, as well as

participate in project-based initiatives that require collegiality (Davis, 2016, pp. 63-64). As Bright

discusses, "building a new team was not a single step or process, but an interconnected effort that

encompassed change management, teambuilding, and communication" (Bright, 2018, p. 136).

Routine examination and revision of workflows and procedures go hand-in-hand with

organizational change and shifts in position responsibilities, and may require shifts in leadership

styles. The process of revising workflows may include investigation and implementation of labor-

saving technology, outsourcing to vendors, eliminating tasks, and redeploying and retraining staff

(Eden, 2010; Heinrich & LaFollette, 2010; Petrusa, 2016). Constant revision of workflows, along with

flexibility and adaptability, is required in order to keep up with fluctuations, especially in electronic

resource management. Some libraries have successfully developed learning environments in which

staff are encouraged to experiment and make mistakes in order to learn and develop new workflows to

meet changing needs (Schmidt & Dulaney, 2014, p. 73). For learning environments to thrive, however,

an environment of trust must be established so that all staff feel comfortable experimenting and

making mistakes without fear of retaliation or disdain (Gibson, 2016, p. 151; Schmidt & Dulaney, 2014).

Such an environment allows peer-to-peer learning to develop (Decker, 2017, p. 291). Learning

environments require department leaders who are "able to identify shared goals, model good

communication, reframe failures as learning opportunities, create a safe environment for speaking up,

encourage difficult conversations, . . . expect conflict, while moderating it" (Schmidt & Dulaney, 2014, p.

74) and who believe staff have the potential to develop and grow (Gibson, 2016). This is a significant shift in leadership skills from the previous hierarchical model most often used in technical services.

Like workflow redesign, space redesign can also provide an opportunity to establish learning environments and encourage empowerment. Existing technical services spaces are generally designed for print resource management tasks and "continuous individual operations rather than collaborative project work that ebbs and flows" (Felix, 2015). In addition, space redesign projects may be utilized as "a morale building, team-oriented activity by effectively addressing . . . emotional responses through communication and direct empowerment activities" (vanDuinkerken & Mosley, 2009, p. 6). Staff involvement in space redesign also helps drive staff adjustment "to prospective changes in their workspace" (Bright, 2018, p. 137). Empowerment requires delegation of responsibility and decision-making but reaps benefits in higher staff morale and personal pride (vanDuinkerken & Mosley, 2009, p. 8). Space reconfiguration projects can also provide staff with the opportunity to learn how their work influences or interacts with the work of others, both within the unit and outside. Planning, flexibility, varied communication strategies, and an opportunity for evaluation are critical to a successful space redesign initiative (vanDuinkerken & Mosley, 2009, p. 6; Williams, 2002, p. 25).

As work becomes more project-based and team-driven, soft skills have become more important for all position levels. Versatility, flexibility, emotional intelligence, and strong communication skills are critical to thriving in an ever-changing environment (Winjum, 2011). Technical services staff are required to possess not only knowledge of library science principles and their companion technical skills, but also be able to translate those skills to domains outside technical services (Luesebrink, 2015, p. 70). For example, "A copy cataloger may have a rigidly defined job responsibility, but someone who is detail-orientated, able to work independently, and familiar with

subject analysis can contribute in a variety of areas" (Gibson, 2016, p. 149), such as scholarly

communications or data management. While the ability to work independently is still an important

soft skill for technical services positions, it is increasingly critical for staff to be able to function in a

collaborative team environment, both within the unit and with other departments, and to "keep the

big picture always in mind" (Davis, 2016, p. 61; Holobar & Jamison, 2017, p. 67).

Background

Eastern Washington University (EWU) is a regional, comprehensive public university with

approximately 12,000 students and 500 faculty members and offers a variety of undergraduate and

graduate degree programs. Located on EWU's primary campus in Cheney, WA, the EWU Libraries

provide access to approximately 1.1 million physical items and 275 electronic databases. EWU

Libraries employs around 40 personnel, about half professional librarians and half in staff roles.

The Collection Services unit at Eastern Washington University Libraries' includes a team of four faculty

librarians and four classified staff handling work in the areas of collections acquisition, pay, cataloging,

electronic resources management, discovery, and collection development. Needs and individual

workloads within the unit have substantially changed in the past decade, influenced by trends in

publishing models, shifts in collection budget impact from print (and just-in-case) acquisitions to

predominantly electronic and serial resources, and more point-of-need directed acquisition. In

addition, work efficiencies realized through consortium membership, and increased emphasis on the

end-user experience with the development of discovery systems, have shifted staff priorities. While

employment longevity for classified staff ranges from five to twenty years, the professional librarians

are all recent hires, with the longest serving four years. As a result of the economic downturn, Eastern

Washington University Libraries, like many organizations, reduced staffing by almost 7 FTE in 2009 with

the majority coming from the paraprofessional ranks. Historically managed in a strongly hierarchical fashion, the Collection Services unit structure was flattened as a result of library-wide organizational change beginning in 2012.

In 2015, the Collection Services unit transitioned to co-management under two of the librarians, who each supervised two classified staff. The management styles of the new supervisors were less hierarchical and more team-oriented than previous managers. In addition, the historical distribution of work responsibilities, as well as position classifications dictated by state requirements, did not align with trends in the evolution of technical services work to more collaborative and team-oriented modes. Since 2015, organizational shifts resulted in the Collection Management Librarian and Discovery Services and Systems Librarian positions becoming more integrated into what was formerly a cataloging- and acquisitions-focused unit. Collection Services' focus expanded to consider activities from the beginning of the resource management lifecycle to the end, with increased emphasis on end-user experience in the discovery system. Consequently, the supervising librarians launched a series of activities to transform team members' expectations. The goal was to create a learning environment where classified staff could be proactive in decision-making, take ownership in day-to-day issue management, learn from each other to solve problems, and trust that failures would be accepted as learning opportunities. Redesigning physical space, instituting summer retreats, establishing unit ground rules, and ensuring classified staff's involvement in hiring processes helped staff gradually incorporate an understanding that their investment in decision making was critical to the unit's success in this rapidly changing landscape.
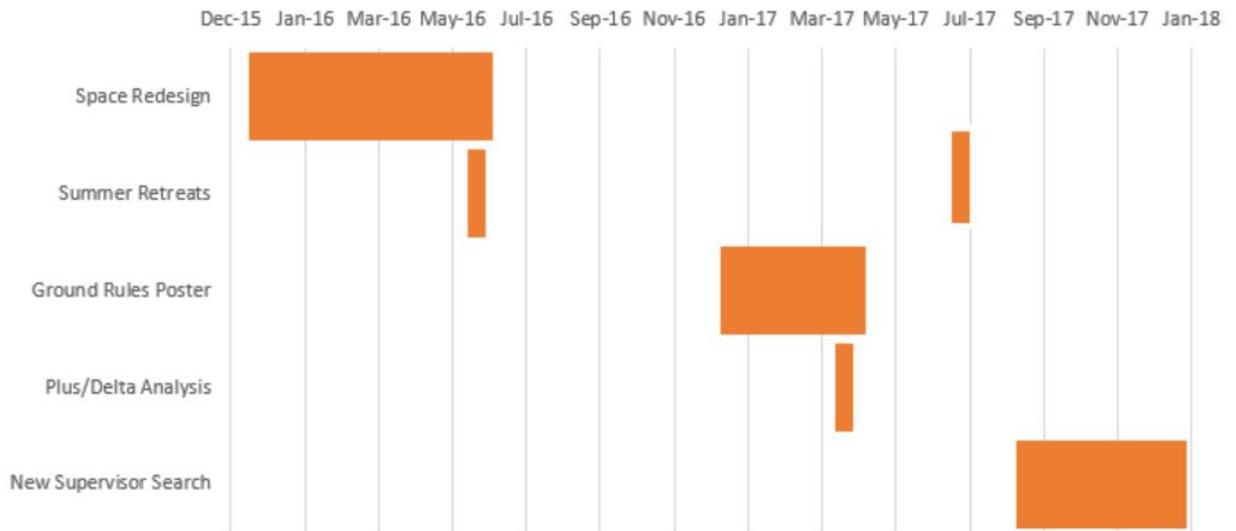
Figure 1: Timeline of Activities, 2015-2018.

Redesigning Physical Space

In late 2015, the first major unit project was a reconfiguration of the Collection Services workspace related to the following goals:

- Acknowledge an increasingly project-based work environment (as opposed to regular and evenly distributed work—for example, ordering of monographs, with local cataloging done in-house, and managed in a single institution ILS/catalog environment)

- Confirm and continue an intentionally collaborative approach acknowledging the overall high functioning and individually-directed work of unit members

- Work more transparently as a unit, with a focus on empowered unit members

For the space redesign project, three paraprofessional staff volunteered, along with one of the supervising librarians, and identified specific tasks for which each person took responsibility. The initial meeting focused on group decision-making and identification of options to move toward a

streamlined reconfigured space. Primary goals for the supervising librarians were to move beyond a librarian-driven plan, acknowledge the experience and expertise of paraprofessional staff in knowing their own needs, and provide opportunity to work collaboratively on the project. Tasks identified included an inventory of existing space and furniture and collection of individual feedback from all unit members. The student workers' supervisor focused on outlining specific needs and potential space layout related to materials processing space for student workers. Initial data collection occurred during the slow period between academic quarters over the winter holidays.

A proposal prepared for library administration outlined the project's rationale and requested budget support for the space redesign. The proposal listed the benefits of space redesign in comparison to the consequences of continuing with the current space, without changes:

Benefits:

- Brighter workspace to improve overall atmosphere

- More flexible materials processing space

- Open sightlines to doors and visitors

- Use of an open and centralized area as a meeting space to host both ad hoc as well as scheduled unit meetings

- Room for flexible project space

- Position the unit to be more flexible and agile in anticipating future needs

Consequences of No Change:

- Cluttered work and meeting workspace

- Disorganized and non-defined workspaces

- Inefficient student worker processing spaces

- Blocked sightlines from safety/security standpoint

After outlining tasks to be completed in December 2015, work continued through March 2016 to identify specific needs related to the work of the unit as well as to narrow down proposed layout options. In late February the unit received the approval from the library administration to proceed with initial and low-impact (i.e. low-cost) changes. The first task was to remove furniture no longer needed—a task completed in May 2016.

Information collection, internal review and feedback continued throughout the six-month project period. Toward the end of 2016, the Collection Services unit organized an open house for library employees to showcase and celebrate the redesigned space, and to acknowledge the work of the group (Eickholt, Hartse, Sliger Krause, in press).

Plus/Delta Analysis

As a follow-up to the space redesign project, a staff person from outside the unit facilitated a Plus/Delta discussion in April 2017. The Plus/Delta concept is a tool for continuous improvement, and guides participants to highlight aspects of a situation that are working and identify those that could be improved with a focus on engaged and productive problem solving. Pluses are positive aspects, while Deltas are areas for improvement (Iowa State University Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, n.d.).

Plus/Delta evaluations had been utilized by a previous EWU library administration as an opportunity for individuals to provide feedback on projects or events with a focus on improvements through action, rather than outlining negatives alone. A primary goal of the space redesign Plus/Delta was to review and confirm that the changes were improvements of the previous configuration. The evaluations started with a question, "*how do our observations impact the work of the unit?*" This

question guided the conversation beyond observations of unanticipated disadvantages of the space reconfiguration and encouraged suggestions for changes. The purpose of a Plus/Delta discussion, as documented on a PDF template from the University of California, San Francisco is to "provide a simple method for individuals or teams to engage in reflection as an approach to continuous improvement" ("Plus (+) / Delta (Δ)," n.d.). The template allowed everyone to come to the discussion with the same expectations—that Delta observations should be specific, action oriented (begin with a verb), and within the realm of possibility—among other things.

Focusing the conversations of the Delta items (opportunities for improvement) into actionable, specific suggestions fit well with goals for empowerment of unit members and increased collaboration to problem solving.

Instituting Summer Retreats

The next activity used to empower classified staff in decision-making was the establishment of annual unit summer retreats. The dual purpose of the summer retreats was to step away from the library's operational aspects and to increase unit member collaboration. The summer retreat agendas generally offered the opportunity to reflect on the team's successes over the last year, to brainstorm where the team could improve collaboration with each other and with other library units, and to build awareness of soft skills, such as communication and conflict management. Agendas deliberately did not include activities where staff focused on building technical skills or expertise, in order to encourage growth of soft skills, which have become more important as work becomes more collaborative and project-based. The summer retreats were intentionally located outside the library building, reinforcing the step away from daily operations and the technical expertise associated with operational tasks. A guest speaker from EWU Human Resources facilitated sessions on soft skills, providing a

knowledgeable outside voice for discussions that touched on personal attributes and actions. Finally, to express appreciation for the classified staff and to foster additional team-building, each retreat culminated in a team lunch paid for by the faculty librarians.

The first summer retreat in 2016 focused specifically on acknowledging that the Collection Services unit was high functioning, and team members valued the opportunity to complete their work without a great deal of oversight. The team identified many successes from the past year, including the space reorganization project, a successful fiscal year-end close in the relatively new integrated library system, contributions to consortial data clean-up projects, continuous learning related to the integrated library system, contributions by the unit to transition interlibrary loan functions to the Access Services unit, and responding to vendor-initiated changes with physical material binding. The topic of the presentation by EWU Human Resources was communication styles and working together in a continuously changing workplace. The focus on success reinforced that classified staff had the ability to work together to learn new skills and to tackle new challenges in the ever-changing technical services world. Building awareness of different communication styles introduced the importance of soft skills in the Collection Services unit and emphasized their importance in the increasingly collaborative and project-based work of the unit.

In 2017, the summer retreat placed a greater focus on the future. A significant amount of time was spent discussing the preferred qualities of the new Collection Maintenance Librarian. This position would assume supervision of all four classified staff positions and coordinate the implementation of collection management decisions, including acquisitions, deselection and general collection maintenance. The "Engaging Classified Staff Involvement in Hiring Processes" section later in this article provides additional details on this discussion. A second agenda item tasked Collection Services

staff to consider collaboration with other Library units, particularly Access Services. During the

discussion, staff were encouraged to approach work or issues as problem-solving partners. Ideas for

improving collaboration included encouraging informal staff-to-staff problem-solving, actively

listening to concerns brought by others, and assessing when it is appropriate to offer education and

training. To continue the investment in improving team human relations, an agenda item for the 2017

retreat included an encore visit by a university Human Resource representative, this time speaking

about identifying conflict management styles and improving self-awareness. By encouraging

Collection Services staff to work in a peer-to-peer environment with staff in other units, it was hoped

that greater confidence in staff's ability to create positive change might be fostered. Reinforcing that

communication with staff outside the unit is important and an expected part of technical services

positions in today's more collaborative and project-oriented environment.

Establishing Unit Ground Rules

Utilizing the ALA-sponsored webinar, "Build a Great Team" (Hakala-Ausperk, 2016), as a

jumping off point, the Collection Services unit supervisors facilitated the development of shared

ground rules in order to reinforce the shared values of unit members. In early 2017, all staff in

Collection Services viewed this webinar and were asked to identify two to three concepts that

resonated with them. Consequently, the unit agreed to adopt the webinar's suggestion to create

"Ground Rules," collective guidelines for workplace culture. This creation process was essential to

establishing buy-in from team members, because the rules were team-driven and not mandated by

management. The Collection Services staff spent several of its monthly meetings brainstorming,

honing, and discussing what ultimately became ten Ground Rules, many of which were discussed in

the "Build a Great Team" webinar:

- Contribute to the success of the unit

- Communicate; share information

- Disagree with grace and tact

- Express opinions

- Listen carefully for content/context

- Be professional, not personal

- Silence implies consent

- Propose alternatives

- Emotions are ok; aggression is not

- Everyone makes mistakes

The team created a poster to display within the unit's physical space to serve as a tangible

reminder of the type of behaviors the team had agreed upon. These behaviors were put into practice as

the poster design evolved and staff expressed their opinions, proposed alternatives, and disagreed

with grace and tact. One staff member suggested the final poster design, which then underwent an

extended revision process before final approval by all unit members. Both the managing librarians

strongly felt that taking time to allow unit members to consider and react to both the individual

Ground Rules as well as the poster design options was critical to establishing an end result everyone

could own.

Figure 2. Look for the mistake.

Engaging Classified Staff in Hiring Processes

In early summer 2017, one of the supervising librarians was promoted to a vacated Collection Management Librarian position, resulting in supervisory changes across the unit. To streamline workflows, and to further the goal of integrating unit roles, the Collection Maintenance Librarian position was rewritten to manage all four classified staff. As the staff had endured numerous supervisory changes over the past 15 years, apprehension was high going into the search process. In preparation for this supervisory change, the librarians brainstormed the most meaningful ways to involve staff in the recruitment process of their new supervising librarian. Staff volunteers were

solicited to serve on the search committee, and two of the four staff stepped forward. To further ensure staff could voice their specific needs and be heard, the 2017 summer retreat included a discussion of supervisory qualities and communication styles desired by staff.

As the newest member of the unit, and with no direct reports, the Discovery Services & Systems Librarian served as a neutral discussion leader at the 2017 summer retreat. Since classified staff did not feel as if they were responding to their current supervisors, the resulting discussion was frank, and less filtered.

In describing the desired supervisory qualities in the Collection Maintenance Librarian position, staff quickly identified inclusive decision-making, collegiality, embracing change, seeking out expertise, valuing differences in opinion, and modeling good self-reflection as desired traits in a successful candidate. Preferred communication styles included setting goals and guidelines with clear expectations, negotiating with stakeholders, and setting boundaries. Staff noted that they did not want a supervisor who demonstrated a negative approach focused on faults and problems, nor one who exhibited micromanagement tendencies. In addition, they did not want a supervisor who was not approachable or "too busy" to be available. Condescending attitudes and talking down to staff were also not favorably viewed. Yelling and screaming were unacceptable, which prompted one staff person to coin the memorable phrase "no sawmill bosses."

Unit classified staff were actively engaged throughout fall 2017 on the search committee for the Collection Maintenance Librarian position. Staff participants shared equal standing with librarians and took on responsibilities for all aspects of the search. After interviews concluded, the Discovery Services & Systems Librarian debriefed unit staff to elicit feedback on the candidates. Employing this neutral approach (again, being debriefed by a staff member who did not directly evaluate or supervise the

participants) was once again successful. The staff did not worry about their current supervisors' perceptions, and provided honest assessments of each candidate's qualities. Creating these "safe discussions" reinforced to staff that their participation was key to the success of the unit (Bright, 2018, p. 136). The discussion focused on important soft skills for supervisory success: communication, honesty, integrity, and other qualities that had been identified in the summer retreat. The discussion began with an ice breaker in which staff could anonymously rate how each candidate met the agreed upon skills. By encouraging staff to take ownership of the discussion, listening to their input, and having them represented as full members of the search committee, the search successfully concluded with the hire of a Collection Maintenance Librarian in February 2018.

Reflections and Conclusion

The Collection Services unit has demonstrated progress in creating and nurturing a learning environment in which all team members participate, regardless of rank or function. Projects can be launched by anyone, and those with expertise — classified staff or librarians —contribute their ideas and skills. One example of this new approach is how the unit handles maintenance and troubleshoots issues for the library's EZProxy server. Prior to the Discovery Services & Systems Librarian joining the unit, the work was handled by one of the supervising librarians and another librarian not assigned to the unit. Communication sometimes slowed, and important authentication issues could not always be addressed in a timely fashion. To increase effectiveness in management and responsiveness, two unit staff were identified and trained along with the Discovery Services & Systems Librarian. After this training, a systematic annual review to ensure currency of resource configuration stanzas was successfully completed. The library now has three trained employees who can troubleshoot, make additions and deletions, and ensure that authentication issues are quickly remedied throughout the

year. This team-based approach, reliant on learning from each other and granting permission for others to step forward and problem-solve, is a shift from the prior hierarchical structure, and best serves the needs of our institution and users.

A further disruption of the hierarchy is occurring as the flattening of functions within Collection Services to meet project-based needs becomes the normal approach to work. As print and other tangible acquisitions continue to diminish (monographic spending decreased by 10 percent in fiscal year 2018 over the past four fiscal year averages), unit staff are spending more time discussing, re-examining, and ultimately incorporating new procedures into workflows for procurement and discovery of electronic and digital resources. The lifecycle of owned ebooks, for example, can neither be effectively managed by one function nor one position. Owned ebooks, with their licensing agreements, require a hybrid of skills in monographic description, electronic resource management, and usage models. Developing these skills requires staff to communicate and learn together.

While the unit has made measured progress, it recognizes areas for continued growth and improvement. One area is a higher level of collaboration and communication with other units. A discussion with Access Services identified duplicative shelf-reading processes and provided the opportunity to share documented procedures. However, momentum quickly expired and staff and librarians have not been invigorated to seek continued ways to work together. The Ground Rules poster is another area requiring ongoing reflection. While prominently displayed throughout the unit, it can sometimes fade into the background of everyday activities. To fully embody the Ground Rules, the unit decided to revisit the guidelines on the poster as agenda items at future staff meetings and retreats. These annual unit retreats are essential in continuing the important soft skills development

that is needed for the new collaborative approach, as well as in revisiting unit goals, and celebrating successes.

Efforts launched in 2015 to reshape the functioning and culture of the Collection Services unit moved staff closer to a model of collaboration wherein managing from the bottom up is the focus and norm. The staff-driven space redesign and assessment using the Plus/Delta analysis to encourage action-oriented solutions, establishment of summer retreats, and a staff-driven ground rules agreement, improved collaboration. Through this work, the Collection Services unit at Eastern Washington University Libraries has encouraged active staff engagement in decision-making, and laid the groundwork for a team ready to anticipate and adapt to an ever-changing environment.

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