Workforce Issues in Library and Information Science (WILIS):

General Overview of the WILIS 1 Survey

WILIS Short Report 1
WILIS is a collaborative research partnership of the UNC Chapel Hill School of Information and Library Science and the UNC Institute on Aging, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through its Librarians for the 21st Century Program.
WILIS 1 Study Team Members

Joanne Gard Marshall, Principal Investigator
Victor W. Marshall, Co-Principal Investigator
Jennifer Craft Morgan, Co-Principal Investigator

Deborah Barreau, Co-Investigator
Barbara B. Moran, Co-Investigator
Paul Solomon, Co-Investigator
Bob Konrad, Co-Investigator

Cheryl A. Thompson, Project Manager
Danielle Borasky, Webmaster and Librarian
Susan Rathbun-Grubb, Graduate Research Assistant
Chad Morgan, Graduate Research Assistant
The WILIS studies

- WILIS 1 is a comprehensive study of the career patterns of graduates of LIS programs in North Carolina since 1964.

- WILIS 2 is a project to develop a shared recent graduates survey that may be used by all LIS programs.
Participating LIS programs

- Appalachian State University Library Science Program
  http://www.ced.appstate.edu/departments/les/
- Central Carolina Community College Library and Information Technology Program
  http://www.cccc.edu/Programs/Library_Info_Technology.html
- East Carolina University Department of Library Science and Instructional Technology
  http://lsit.coe.ecu.edu/
- North Carolina Central University School of Library and Information Sciences
  http://www.nccuslis.org/
- UNC Chapel Hill School of Information and Library Science
  http://www.ils.unc.edu/index.html
- UNC Greensboro Department of Library and Information Studies
  http://www.uncg.edu/lis/
North Carolina – a profile

Demographics (Source: US Census Bureau, 2004-2007)

- **Population** – 9,069,370 (2007 est.)
  - 51.0% Female
  - 74.0% White, 21.7% Black, 6.7% Hispanic
  - 12.2% 65 years or older
- **Median household income** – $40,863
- **Education**
  - 78.1% of adults (25+) are high school graduates
  - 22.5% of adults (25+) have a bachelor’s degree or higher

Number of libraries (Source: National Center for Education Statistics)

- **Public** – 383 service outlets, 40 bookmobiles (2005)
- **School** – 1,877 public school library/media centers (2000)
- **Academic** – 125 in post-secondary degree-granting institutions (2006)
Methodology
WILIS 1 components

- **University-based LIS programs**
  1964–2005 graduates of five LIS programs in North Carolina
  - Pilot survey of 750 graduates (April-May 2007)
  - Non-response survey of 400 non-respondents (June-August 2007)
  - Full survey of remaining 7,566 graduates (Sept-Dec 2007)
    - Includes 169 UNC-Chapel Hill 2006-2007 graduates who received email-contact only (Oct-Dec 2007)

- **Community college-based LIS program**
  All 58 graduates of the Central Carolina Community College program since its founding in 2000
  - Full survey (Dec 2007-March 2008)
WILIS 1 pilot study method

- 505/9089 – 5.5% unable to contact
- Randomly selected 750 graduates from the five university programs
- Solicited updated alumni contact information
- Sent postcards to check accuracy of the lists (119 cases updated)
- Sent invitation letter
- Sent email reminder
- Sent second letter and/or email
- Conducted non-response study
WILIS 1 non-response study

- Conducted June-August 2007
  - Web, paper and telephone surveys
- Comparison of pilot participants and non-respondents indicated representativeness
- Conducting the non-response study increased the overall pilot study response rate by 8%
- As a result, we added an additional mailed letter to the full survey design
WILIS 1 method

- Obtained alumni contact information from LIS programs
- Used AlumniFinder to update contact information
- Used listservs to solicit updated contact information from alumni
- Used postcards to check address accuracy
- Sent invitation letter
- Sent second letter reminder
- Sent email reminders
Results
WILIS 1 response rates

- 7,566 graduates from the five LIS university programs in NC
- 35.1% response rate for all programs
- 31.4% response rate for graduates with a library science master’s degree
- 26.2% response rate for graduates with an information science master’s degree
Respondents by graduation year cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation Year</th>
<th>All Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=2627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964-1973</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-1983</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-1993</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-2003</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2007</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Type</td>
<td>All Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree – library science (BLS, BSLS)</td>
<td>2% (N=59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree – information science (BSIS)</td>
<td>.4% (N=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree – library science (MA, MLS, MSLS, MLIS)</td>
<td>89% (N=2369)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree – information science (MSIS, MIS)</td>
<td>6% (N=165)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Master’s degrees (MLS/MIS)</td>
<td>.2% (N=6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD – information and library science</td>
<td>2% (N=44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Programs N=2627</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>82% female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall mean age</td>
<td>50.2, sd 12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall median age</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean age for those currently working</td>
<td>47.9, sd 10.9 (N=2054)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age for those currently working</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>11% non-white</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where are NC LIS graduates now?

- 14 countries
  - Austria
  - Bahrain
  - Bermuda
  - China
  - England
  - Germany
  - Israel
  - Italy
  - Japan
  - New Zealand
  - Peru
  - Spain
  - Taiwan
  - United States (all 50)

- 76% live in the Southeastern US, primarily in NC (57%) and VA (9%)

All Respondents
N=2530
LIS as an aging workforce

- In 2000, median age of the U.S. labor force was 39.3 years
- In 2004, average age of U.S. nurses was 46.8 years
- The WILIS median age of working LIS grads was 50.0 years
- Average age at LIS graduation was 32.7 years
Current Employment
Current employment status

- Employed: 76%
- Not working, seeking work: 1%
- Not working, NOT seeking work: 3%
- Retired, but working: 5%
- Retired, NOT working: 15%

N=2552
Setting of current job

Which of the following best describes your current job?

- Library setting, using LIS skills: 76.0%
- Library setting, NOT using LIS skills: 0.2%
- Non-library, using LIS skills: 12.0%
- Non-library, NOT using LIS skills: 6.0%
- Self-employed: 3.0%
- Other: 3.0%

N=2008
## Setting of current job

Which of the following best describes your current job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>MSLS N=1801</th>
<th>MSIS N=132</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library setting, using LIS skills</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library setting, NOT using LIS skills</td>
<td>.2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-library, using LIS skills</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-library, NOT using LIS skills</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Current job, by type of library

Working in Libraries
N=1515
If not in libraries, where are LIS grads working? [those using LIS skills]

- Education: 34%
- IT: 15%
- Medical/Pharm. research: 7%
- Government: 7%
- Research agency/institute: 5%
- Other: 32%

N=231
If not in libraries, where are LIS grads working? [those NOT using LIS skills]

- Education: 35%
- Banking/Finance: 11%
- IT industry: 8%
- Government: 7%
- Non-profit organizations: 6%
- Healthcare: 6%
- Other: 27%

N=114
## Current job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Programs (N=1998)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average number of hours worked per week</td>
<td>39.71, sd. 9.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered full-time</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervise others</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Librarians</strong> (N=1455)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual salary</td>
<td>$51,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median annual salary</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-librarians</strong> (N=418)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual salary</td>
<td>$73,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median annual salary</td>
<td>$62,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average US librarian salary: $57,809 (median - $53,000)

Source: 2007 American Library Association – Allied Professional Association Salary Survey
Professional identity

Do you consider yourself to be a librarian, an information professional, both, or neither?

Librarian: 41%
Information Professional: 15%
Neither: 9%
Both: 35%

Currently working, N=2057
If neither, what do you consider yourself to be?

Selected answers

- Accountant
- Antiquarian appraiser
- Archivist
- Artist
- Bioinformatician
- Bookseller
- Business analyst
- Business owner
- Church communications director
- Community college administrator
- Computer analyst
- Consultant
- Copyeditor
- Corporate researcher
- Data architect
- Director of preschool
- Director of nonprofit
- Financial professional
- Freelance editor/writer
- Healthcare professional
- Insurance professional
- Intelligence liaison officer
- Internet software engineer
- IT professional
- Massage therapist
- Museum educator
- Nail technician
- Network engineer
- Office manager
- Paraprofessional
- Professional coach
- Professor of criminal justice
- Project manager
- Sales manager
- Teacher of transcendental meditation
- Principal
- Systems engineer
- Stay at home mom
- Teacher
- Professor of LIS
- Retired librarian
- Attorney
- Missionary
- Student
- Volunteer
- Homemaker
- Field botanist
- Grandmother
- Disabled
- Career changer
- Nurse
- Musician
- Pastor
- Social worker
- Writer
Professional identity

Do you consider yourself to have left the LIS field?

- **Currently working**
  - Yes: 13%
  - No: 87%
  - N=2061

- **Not currently working**
  - Yes: 62%
  - No: 38%
  - N=490
Retention
Retention – current job

Do you expect to leave your current employer in the coming year?

- Will definitely leave within a year: 3%
- Chances are quite good that I will leave within the year: 6%
- Uncertain as to whether I will leave within the year: 15%
- Chances are very slight that I will leave within the year: 27%
- Definitely will not leave within a year: 50%

N=1917
Retention – LIS field

Do you think you will be working in LIS 3 years from now?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1578</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

88% Yes, 12% No
12% (154 respondents) indicate they will not be working in LIS 3 years from now. What jobs will they be leaving?

- **School library**: 34%
- **College/university library**: 26%
- **Public library**: 19%
- **Federal/state/local gov't library**: 6%
- **Health/medical library**: 4%
- **Community college library**: 4%
- **Other special library**: 4%
- **Other workplace**: 3%

N=154
Retention – LIS field

Why will they no longer be in LIS 3 years from now?

![Bar chart showing retention reasons]

- **Retirement**: 75%
- **Other factors**: 25%

*N=154*
Overall, I am satisfied with LIS as a career

- Strongly agree: 45%
- Agree: 50%
- Disagree: 4%
- Strongly disagree: 1%

N=1580
Retirement
Career satisfaction of retired LIS professionals

Overall, I am satisfied with LIS as a career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=411
Retirement

- 25% will definitely be working full-time after 62 \((N=1912)\)

- 8% will definitely be working full-time after 65 \((N=1458)\)

- 23% will definitely NOT be working full-time after 65 \((N=1458)\)
Regarding your retirement plans, which of the following do you plan to do?

- Stop working altogether: 14%
- Never stop working: 10%
- Not given it much thought: 15%
- No current plans, continue as is: 40%
- Reduce work hours: 21%
- Take phased retirement: 8%
- Change the kind of work I do: 19%
- Work for myself: 10%
- Work until my health fails: 11%

N=1917
Volunteering

- 86% expect to volunteer after they retire (N=1905)

- 65% expect to volunteer in a library or information setting (N=1616)

- 78% expect to use LIS skills in their volunteer work (N=1620)
Workforce projections

How many are likely to leave the full time workforce? (if intentions hold true)

- 5 years from now (2013), 49% of those 62+ are likely to have left – 12% of workforce
- 10 years from now (2018), 63% of those 62+ are likely to have left – 23% of workforce
Workforce projections

What types of libraries will experience the most retirements?

- Of those who will likely retire 5 years from now (2013) (n=182)
  - 41% are school librarians (n=74)
  - 23% are public librarians (n=42)
  - 27% are academic librarians (n=49)
  - 9% are special librarians (n=17)

- 71% are from NC, SC, GA, and VA, but the other 29% are distributed across the US
Workforce projections

What types of libraries will experience the most retirements?

- Of those who will likely retire 10 years from now (2018) (n=357)
  - 43% are school librarians (n=154)
  - 23% are public librarians (n=81)
  - 25% are academic librarians (n=88)
  - 9% are special librarians (n=34)

- 78% are from NC, SC, GA, and VA, but the other 22% are distributed across the US
Trends
Trends
In the future, libraries will...

- Become even more important as "place" (67%)
- Be able to compete with commercial information providers (77%)
- Become more central to their communities (71%)
- Increase outsourcing of functions (73%)
- Rely more on paraprofessionals for daily operations (86%)
- Not replace all of the retiring librarians (75%)
- Hire more staff without LIS degrees (70%)

% who agree
N=2180
In the future, libraries should increase their focus on...

- Hiring more librarians: 31%
- Hiring more IT specialists: 42%
- Developing library leaders: 50%
- Renovating library facilities: 50%
- Information literacy: 73%
- User defined needs: 56%
- Remote access: 72%
- Increasing role as community centers: 64%
- Marketing library services: 71%

% who agree
N=2206
Highlighted

- LIS is an aging workforce and overall employment is high

- Most LIS graduates tend to work in libraries and most consider themselves to be working in the LIS field.

- Almost all graduates use LIS skills in their work even if they have left the field.

- Respondents work in a variety of workplaces but the traditional library settings (school, academic, public) still top the list.

- A majority of respondents (65%) intend to volunteer in a library or information setting after they retire.
Future analysis

- Over 1,700 variables available
- Detailed work histories
- Detailed educational histories
- Job quality
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Retirement issues
- LIS program evaluation [recent grads]
Future reports

- By type of employer
- Deans, directors and chairs survey
- Race, ethnicity, gender, and age
- Recruitment and retention
- Historical trends
- Survey toolkit
Note that these are preliminary descriptive results only. For further information, contact the investigators at wilis@unc.edu