

# STAFF RESOURCES

## Strategic Directions in Professional Development

### Rutgers University Libraries

#### 2007

With the release of the report, *An Investment in Learning: A Proposed Plan for Learning, Training, and Professional Development for the Rutgers University Libraries*, the Libraries' community articulated its belief in learning as integral to the successful achievement of goals. The report described learning as a responsibility that is shared among all members of the Libraries' community. As we move into the new strategic plan for the Libraries, the Training and Learning Advisory Committee offers a professional development framework on which to build and grow.

The Advisory Committee has offered the community a series of programs designed to build expanded knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the work of the Libraries-sharing the expanded use of technologies, placing the Libraries' projects and products in the larger context of both the larger university, and higher education in the 21st century. Throughout these series, and other individual programs over the past several years, we have established and cultivated partnerships within the Libraries, within the University, and the larger community to enhance the learnings derived from participation in these programs. We plan to continue this model: collaborating with both old and new partners to create a dynamic, vibrant learning environment. We call this model- **Creating Our Future-Leading the Way!** The model is constructed in three streams: Discovering, Energizing, and Celebrating. These streams are distinct while also closely related.

- **Discovering:** Within this stream, we plan to present programs addressing broader conceptual themes-challenges facing academic research libraries, potential resources to use to meet these challenges. The programs would be facilitated by experts both from within and outside the Libraries. The programs would also create opportunities for applying these new understandings in the current Libraries' environment.
- **Energizing:** Within this stream, we would offer multiple series of programs-building skills and knowledge; providing practical learning experiences to support opportunities to apply the ideas and concepts presented in the Discovering stream. We are developing some new series for this stream, and would also use series already in place in the Libraries' curriculum.

- **Celebrating:** Within this stream, we would create opportunities to network, to be in dialogue around a variety of topics, ideas, and issues generated in either the Discovering or Energizing streams. These opportunities would sometimes be less formal [e.g. brown bag discussion groups, lunchtime seminars], other times more structured [e.g. a Libraries' Creativity Fair, special events marking annual National Library Week, Banned Books Week]. In this stream, everyone in the Libraries' community would have an opportunity to learn more about ourselves, share experiences and insights.
- We will continue our work expanding and enhancing the Training and Development website to make it a more informative, exciting learning resource. [Energizing, Celebrating]
- We will continue the technical skill development series covering Microsoft Office products as well as other technical systems changes that impact the processing of work. [Energizing]
- We also plan to initiate a series of informal, brown bag events-a book/reading club; sharing experiences; discussing issues-that would be offered irregularly to foster dialogue, sharing ideas. [Celebrating]

### **Examples of programming in each of the streams:**

**Discovering:** In the spring 2008 we launched the Libraries' Diversity Education Initiative designed to educate and inform everyone in the diverse community the Libraries serves. The programs presented in the Initiative will expand awareness and understanding of the diverse needs and expectations of that community, while recognizing and honoring the value of the contributions of all of the faculty librarians and staff to the creation and maintenance of a dynamic, vibrant learning environment. The Initiative grows out of the Libraries' Strategic Plan and is supportive of a University-wide focus on Diversity and Equity, exemplified by President McCormick's creation of a President's Council on Diversity and Equity.

We propose to partner with the Center for Organizational Development and Leadership in a program series on Emotional Intelligence and its place in the professional workplace. During the series, individual participants would gain an understanding of their own EI, while together we could collaborate in developing ways to work together more effectively and mindfully, applying the principles of emotional intelligence to our work. This series would be offered on an ongoing basis to accommodate participation from all parts of the Libraries' community. **This program series would be the first to link the Discovering and Energizing streams.**

We propose to partner with Rutgers' Graduate School of Applied Professional Psychology in a program series on Affirmative Inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry is the study and exploration of what gives life to human systems when they function at their best. If we look for what is best and learn from it, we can magnify and multiply our success. In Appreciative Inquiry we appreciate (what gives life?), we imagine (what might be), we determine (what should be), and we create (what will be).

**Energizing:** The Advisory Committee launched the Supervising for Excellence series with an initial cohort of 12 participants nominated by their directors and associate university librarians.

The subject areas covered in the first year: Being a Supervisor at Rutgers University Libraries; Effective Communication Skills I—Verbal Skills; Effective Communication Skills II—Written Skills; Dealing with Difficult Situations.

**Celebrating:** To begin to develop a "portrait" of Rutgers University Libraries, we plan to spotlight individual libraries, to give them opportunities to "brag", to share their strengths, their functions and roles, to place them in the larger context of their campus. **Example:** spotlight John Cotton Dana Library-its Institute of Jazz Studies; its fine collection of art; its perceived function and role within the Newark campus. We would spotlight a library several times through the year, and weave these snapshots into the larger portrait of Rutgers University Libraries.

To bring more color and three-dimensionality to this emergent portrait, we propose having a Libraries' Creativity Fair, where we invite everyone in the community to bring in and share their creations—needlework, visual arts [photography, paintings, ceramics], music, performance, culinary treats, prose, poetry, film, multimedia.