Report

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Staff Development Focus Groups Report

“I think the work of the Staff Development Committee is central to creating community, fostering collaboration and sharing knowledge.” – Focus group participant

Summary
Focus groups were held to find out from staff of the University of Toronto libraries their ideas for activities sponsored by the Library Staff Development Committee. A total of 21 librarians and unionized staff from central, campus, UTM and UTSC libraries attended a session. Participants thought activities held in the past two years were valuable and should be continued. Suggestions for activities they would like to have in the future centered around four themes: training (36%), communication and networking (27%), professional development (20%), and personal interest (17%).

I. Background and Purpose of the Report
Three focus groups were held in March and April 2009 to assist the Staff Development Committee with planning activities for the next year. The purpose of the focus groups was to find out from Library staff their ideas for job-related and personal interest activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee.

II. Details of the Focus Group Sessions
A total of 21 Library staff participated in the focus groups, consisting of:
- 7 librarians
- 5 CUPE 1230
- 7 USWA
- 2 other

Libraries represented were:
- Central Library – 12 participants
- Campus Libraries – 6 participants
- UTM and UTSC Libraries – 3 participants

III. Results

Question 1 - How valuable have the activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee in the past two years been?

Process: By a show of hands, most participants thought activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee were either very valuable or somewhat valuable.

Question 2 - What are some specific activities you think go well and should be continued in the future?

Process: Participants had two minutes to think about the question and record their thoughts by themselves on a piece paper. Suggestions were then written on a flip chart, taking one suggestion from each person until everyone had a chance to respond, continuing around the room until all suggestions were recorded.

Outcome: All three groups liked most of the activities that have been held in the past two years and thought they should be continued. They especially liked the open houses at other libraries, workshops pertaining to their jobs, sessions on what is happening in other departments, and the staff book exhibition.

Prepared for the University of Toronto Libraries Staff Development Committee by Jennifer Wentworth and Richard Hydal (April 2009)
Question 3 - What are some specific activities you would like to have in the future?

Process: Participants had two minutes to think about the question and record their thoughts by themselves on a piece of paper. Suggestions were written on the flip chart, taking one suggestion from each person until everyone had a chance to respond, continuing around the room until all suggestions were recorded.

Outcome: Responses were discussed and clarified. Each participant was then given 20 stickers to vote for their favourite suggestion or suggestions. A total of 396 stickers were used by the three groups.

Suggestions for activities they would like to have in the future centered around four themes (figure 1):

1. Training - 142 stickers or 36% of votes
2. Communication and networking - 108 stickers or 27% of votes
3. Professional development - 79 stickers or 20% of votes
4. Personal interest - 67 stickers or 17% of votes

Figure 1
Distribution of votes for responses to question 3, What are some specific activities you would like to have in the future

Training was the most frequently recurring theme with 36% of the votes.

Training should be timely, focused, hands-on, practical and geared to varying levels of capability. Job-related training was seen as particularly important and could include training on new software such as Endeca and Microsoft Outlook, vendor products, and new cataloguing standards. Sessions should be offered more than once, on different days of the week, and at different times during the day to accommodate work schedules and various campus locations.

Training sessions should be inclusive, and include both librarians and library technicians. There is a perceived lack of inclusiveness in descriptions of and eligibility to participate in some workshops.
Workshops should be geared to functionality, for example staff who work in reference services, with the description being ‘of interest to staff who work on a Reference desk’.

Some representative quotes:

“Timely training, before and immediately after, for example when new software such as Exchange is introduced.”

“Shorter, concentrated, focused training sessions, for example Learning 2.0, broken into short chunks rather than a 3 month long session.”

“A half day with Sirsi or Scholars Portal or any of our vendors and suppliers. They come in, pay for, and organize training on their products without the Library having the expense.”

“Information on the future of Endeca. There are rumours of Endeca being a gateway for more than just the catalogue. Give staff a heads up versus it just appearing.”

“Training before Microsoft Outlook was rolled out. When the previous email software was rolled out, pre-training was offered so that there was some exposure to it before staff had to use it. The software was loaded onto computers in the Library training lab and University Computing Services staff offered training sessions.”

“How to conduct fire drills so there is less chaos. We need written instructions, regular fire drill practices and a current list of wardens.”

“Training on how to present at a conference. This could include how to write conference proposals, and associated issues such as how to prepare to present and how to deal with stress.”

“More information about Endeca. From what fields is it pulling information, i.e. the behind the scenes things that are happening. Have a session on the ‘back of house’ and ‘front of house’ information.”

“Management training for Library staff new to a management position.”

Communication and networking with staff from other libraries and departments was the next most frequently recurring theme with 27% of the votes.

Open houses and small group sessions in particular allow for sharing of information and experiences across functions. The opportunity to visit other libraries to talk with staff to find out the ‘inner workings’ of a library, and meet with staff to share information on how tasks are performed allows communication both within and across library functions.

Participants mentioned the desire to find out about job-related and personal interest resources and services available at the University of Toronto, but sometimes weren’t sure where to find the information.

Communication and networking should be both face to face and electronic.

Some representative quotes:

“There is the question of how to communicate with and amongst ourselves, for example using blogs, community list serves, face to face.”

“Sharing information and experiences across functions. We could meet with people in other departments, for example people from acquisitions, reference and cataloguing get together.”

“Have a team building session to identify staff strengths, then follow up with establishing project teams based on service and staff complements.”
“Open houses, specifically at Robarts, to see behind the scenes, for example where the backlog shelves of titles are. For staff at a federated college, how to connect, how do ‘you’ do it as we all generally do the same or similar activities. For example, how is short term loan done at UTM and other libraries. For staff who don’t catalogue, it would be nice to know how it’s done at other libraries.”

“How do other libraries produce brochures, specifically what graphic design software, such as Photoshop, is being used? With staff cutbacks, graphics design staff is no longer available to assist with the production of brochures.”

“Communication relative to what we work with, for example, Exchange, SIRSI catalogue.”

“Have targeted sessions for staff who work on reference desks to discuss how staff in other libraries deal with reference desk issues, for example the recording of statistics, the use and training of work study students to work on a reference desk.

Professional development accounted for 20% of the votes.

Participants expressed an interest in learning beyond their job requirements, particularly for career development and keeping pace with students’ interests.

The opportunity for Library staff to find out about libraries and the university on both their home campus and the other two campuses was seen as important.

There seemed to be confusion about the overlap of training offered by the Organizational Development and Learning Centre (ODLC), Resource Centre for Academic Technology (RCAT), and the Library Staff Development Committee, and where to go on the website to find out about sessions offered by these three constituents.

Some representative quotes:

“A session on research methods for librarians to get assistance with how to do research for librarians, for example the methodology involved in doing research.”

“Sharing of conference reports because others would benefit from the information. Many staff members go to conferences but experiences are often not shared. It could be simply a drop-in session with their notes and personal perspective. Time is an issue so a time-consuming preparation of a Powerpoint presentation is not necessary.”

“Practical sessions on career development, for example how to go about achieving permanent status.”

“An orientation session for staff new to the Library and university. Something general, for a group, in addition to the orientation for your own job. Orientation also helps staff direct and assist patrons to locations on other campuses. Have a walking tour of the campus.”

“Fun things which might not be immediately beneficial at work or on the desk, but which students and patrons are using, for example Google documents, Learning 2.0. We need to be able to recognize these applications and increase our knowledge of them as they will ask staff if they have a problem.”

Personal interest garnered 17% of the votes.

Participants mentioned wanting social activities designed to meet Library staff with whom they don’t necessarily work. The desire to find out about and take advantage of activities related to personal interests was also mentioned.
Some representative quotes:

“Socially related activities, for example speed networking, like speed dating, to meet colleagues. At the social event, you would spend 5 minutes talking with another person to find out which library they work in and what their job is, exchange business cards, then move on to the next person.”

“Information on university resources, orientation to university services, for example the Family Care Office, RCAT, Metropass, movie tickets.”

“Information on where to make group purchases, for example tickets to events which might fall under the general category of work/life balance.”

“ITS drop-in sessions, which used to be held. Have one hour lunch time sessions to answer questions about our own personal laptops to learn how to use them better. Hold some sessions at libraries other than Robarts.”

**Question 4 - What specific pieces of advice would you give to the Staff Development Committee in planning activities? Choose the top two pieces of advice.**

**Process:** For this task, participants were divided into groups of 3 or 4. One person recorded the opinions of group members and the piece of paper with the opinions collected.

Advice from focus group participants to the Staff Development Committee covered a range of topics.

1. Have multiple days and times for a session, and at times convenient for staff from UTM and UTSC to attend sessions on the St. George campus.

2. More sessions offered and on different days of the week and more manageable duration. For example, offer workshops over a two week period at least 2-3 times in that period.

3. Build in a networking aspect at sessions. For example, at the beginning of a workshop, have everyone introduce themselves, or have a 15 minute break scheduled during or at the end of a workshop for people to mingle.

4. Sessions should be inclusive, geared to both librarians and library technicians.

5. Open houses are a crucial component in learning about other libraries and staff. The size of UofT can be turned into a positive benefit with the wealth of staff shared expertise.

6. Sessions that combine issues covering multiple functions/modules would be of benefit to ‘front room’ and ‘back room’ people.

7. The Committee should advertise themselves more.

8. The Committee should have a web presence to provide a calendar of events, and act as a gateway to advertise and market activities.
IV. Last thoughts

Participants were invited to note any last thoughts on a sheet of paper. These could include something not covered or something they wanted the Staff Development Committee to know about. Some of their thoughts:

“Being offered any workshops is greatly appreciated. A set-up similar to the one that was done today: well organized; casual and less than a day. Thank you.”

“Open houses on the back-end/technical services: e.g. How does cataloguing happen at ‘x’ Library? How are reserves handled at Robarts? More frequent staff choice book exhibits.”

“Great session! Thanks for inviting me. It was good to meet a group of people that (with one exception) I’ve never met before.”

“Some training workshops could be offered at different levels, for example a cursory session for Outlook for those people who are computer savvy, and an in-depth session for people who are less familiar with Outlook and need more training.”

“I realize that Robarts is a convenient location for most library staff (as most staff are at Robarts) but for people from the eastern reaches of campus (Regis, SMC, etc.) it can take 25-30 minutes to get there, and 25-30 minutes to get back. That’s my lunch hour gone. So maybe the Staff Development Committee could consider having events in other locations - Saint Michael’s College, perhaps? Even Gerstein would be much more convenient.”

“Staff Development need more sessions for library technicians.”

“I would like to have more sessions open to other library staff, not just for librarians. Drop-in sessions don’t work well for staff at other campuses so consideration for multiple dates and flexible times (i.e.: early morning, late afternoon) would be good in order for those to attend.”

“Have a ‘suggestion’ workshop option online. If similar suggestions are being submitted then a new workshop could be designed.”

“Enjoyed the focus group session. Again this allowed me to know others at the different campuses. Putting faces to names. I hope our collective input goes to making staff development training more diverse, better and still have fun!”

“Having the focus group was a good idea as you get to learn what others are interested in and what will be useful programming for the future. I appreciate the work it takes to coordinate activities, speakers, participants, etc.”
V. Recommendations

1. Training

1.1 Training workshops should continue to be offered, with particular emphasis on job-related topics. Training should be timely, focused, hands-on, practical, and geared to varying levels of capability. Sessions should be offered more than once, on different days of the week, and at different times during the day to accommodate work schedules and various campus locations.

1.2 Training sessions should include an opportunity for attendees to get to know each other, for example through self-introduction of attendees or a short break for people to chat.

1.3 Training sessions should include both librarians and library technicians. Many jobs which used to be done by librarians are now being done by technicians. Workshops should be advertised for staff who perform a specific function, for example ‘for staff who provide Reference services’.

2. Communication and networking

2.1 Consideration could be given to having regular meetings of staff who do similar jobs in various libraries. Sharing information within functions could lead to streamlining of operations and the opportunity to share ideas on how to handle budget cuts and staff cutbacks.

2.2 Open houses where staff can tour a library to communicate and network with staff are very popular and should be continued. Interest was expressed in having a tour of Robarts Library to see work areas which are ‘behind the scene’.

3. Professional development

3.1 Communication between the Staff Development Committee and Library staff is seen as important. Communication could take the form of a visible and interactive web presence, and include information about upcoming Committee and ODLC sessions, links to relevant UofT websites, and an electronic suggestion box. Consideration could be given to developing a practicum for course FIS2173 for a Faculty of Information student to revamp the Committee website.

3.2 To facilitate planning activities for staff on all three campuses, the Staff Development Committee should consider having a representative from each of UTM and UTSC libraries as regular Committee members.

4. Personal interest

4.1 Social activities to meet staff and have fun outside the work environment could be planned.

“My one other comment for the Staff Development committee is related to an experience I had last year. When the trip to Scarborough was advertised, it particularly stated that all staff, including those at campus libraries, were welcome. Up until then I had been a bit hesitant to participate in some events, like the annual bbq, and some of the bussed tours. It was nice to be invited, so I went, and had a very good time. We talked a lot about inclusion during our session, and campus library staff can be part of that effort to reach out to everyone.” – Focus group participant
VI. Bibliography


Appendix A: Focus Group Summary Sheet, March 31, 2009
Library Staff Development Committee

Background:

Focus Group Purpose:
To find out from Library staff their ideas for job-related and personal interest activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee.

Date: Tuesday 31 March 2009 from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.
Location: Alice Moulton Room, Gerstein Science Information Centre

Participants: Twenty-one staff members were sent signed letters on University of Toronto Library letterhead inviting them to participate. Non respondents were followed up with an email and phone call.

A total of 8 Library staff participated in the focus group, consisting of:
- 2 full time librarians
- 3 full time USWA
- 2 full time CUPE 1230
- 1 technician (non-unionized)

Libraries and Departments represented:
- 5 - Central Library System
- 3 - Campus Libraries

Facilitator: Jennifer Wentworth
Assistant: Richard Hydal

All participants were sent the following thank you email the same day after the focus group.

Subject: Thank You, Focus Group Participants from Session1 (March 31, 2009)

Dear Focus Group Participants,

On behalf of the Staff Development Committee we would like to thank you for your participation in today's session. Suggestions and comments from participants will be compiled and shared with members of the Staff Development Committee, and will be valuable in planning courses, workshops and other activities in the coming year.

Thank you again for your suggestions, comments and enthusiasm.

Focus Group Sub-Committee Members
Richard Hydal (416 946-5094)
Gail Nichol (416 978-7665)
Jennifer Wentworth (416 978-1756)
Participants were given a list of activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee from 2007-2009, then voted on how valuable they thought the activities had been.

**Question 1:**
How valuable have the activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee in the past two years been?

Answers were delivered by a show of hands.

1. Very valuable - 5
2. Somewhat valuable - 3
3. Of little value - 0
4. Don’t know – 0

**Question 2:**
What are some specific activities you think go well and should be continued in the future?

Verbal responses were recorded on a flip chart and are listed in no particular order.

1. You are the University
2. Open houses
3. Health fair
4. Demonstrations of software and its applications, for example, Web 2.0, Powerpoint, applications of work related software
5. Skills development sessions, for example GIS Research and Statistics Research
6. First aid (2 day course)
7. Health and safety issues
8. Staff book exhibition - gives a sense of who people are; website is key [important] to see the list of books because Robarts has to be a destination [Robarts not always close enough to people’s workplace to go to see the exhibition in person]
9. Librarian research afternoon - what they have done on leave
10. Dealing with different [difficult] patrons, i.e. angry, difficult, policy applications
11. Library big picture stuff - what is going on beyond my library department, for example e-books, keeping up to date on new technology
12. New catalogue training sessions

**Question 3:**
What are some specific activities you would like to have in the future?

Verbal responses were written on a flip chart. Participants were each given 20 stickers to apply next to their favourite suggestions. Responses are listed in order by most frequently chosen suggestions of the participants.

1. Timely training, before and immediately after, for example when new software such as Exchange is introduced - **22 stickers; 15%; session 1**
2. Hands-on workshops, i.e. Exchange Calendar as an example - **18 stickers; 12%; session 1**
3. Information on university resources, orientation to university services, i.e. family care, RCAT, metro pass, movie tickets - **18 stickers; 12%; session 1**
4. Question of how to communicate within/amongst ourselves (all UofT libraries), i.e. blogs, community list serves (can get too many emails from listservs), face to face (names) - **17 stickers; 11%; session 1**
5. Fire drills - how to conduct fire drills so there is less chaos; need written instructions; have regular fire drill practices and a current list of wardens; some buildings have regular timed drills with established procedures followed by a critique - **12 stickers; 8%; session 1**
6. Team building session to identify staff strengths, then follow up with establishing project teams based on service and staff compliments - **12 stickers; 8%; session 1**
7. Communication relative to what we work with, i.e. Exchange, SIRSI catalogue - **10 stickers; 7%; session 1**
8. Group purchases - information on where to make group purchases, i.e. tickets to events which might fall under the general category of work/life balance - **10 stickers; 7%; session 1**
9. Career development - practical sessions on career development, for example how to go about achieving permanent status - **6 stickers; 4%; session 1**
10. Shorter, concentrated, focused training sessions, for example Learning 2.0 broken into short chunks rather than a 3 month long session - **5 stickers; 3%; session 1**
11. Training specifically on difficult library situations, i.e. patrons - **5 stickers; 3%; session 1**
12. Test drive new software before it is rolled out to the public, for example the SIRSI catalogue, because this affects our ability to work - 4 stickers; 3%; session 1

13. Content Management System and similar ITS training and demonstrations - 4 stickers; 3%; session 1

14. Sessions for retirement planning and issues, and other life lessons - 3 stickers; 2%; session 1

15. Training sessions for specific issues such as stress - 3 stickers; 2%; session 1

Total number of stickers distributed to participants in session 1: 160
Total number of stickers applied by participants in session 1: 149

**Observation**

Participants used 50% of the total allocated stickers on the following 4 activities they would like to have in the future. Participants indicated they want:

1) timely training to learn about new software
2) hands-on workshops to develop skills on new software
3) information on university resources and services
4) the ability to communicate with Library staff using a variety of formats
Question 4:
What specific pieces of advice would you give to the Staff Development Committee in planning activities? Choose the top two pieces of advice.

Participants were divided into 2 groups of 4. One person recorded the opinions of the group members. Responses from each of the 2 groups are recorded here verbatim.

Responses from Group 1
1. More inclusive for library technicians
2. More sessions offered and on different days of the week and more manageable duration
3. Staff Development Committee blog. More focus groups?
4. Cross promotion of relevant staff development events (e.g. ODLC workshops that would be of interest to Library staff)

Top 2 pieces of advice from Group 1
1. More inclusive for library technicians
2. More sessions offered and on different days of the week and more manageable duration

Responses from Group 2
1. Better ‘advertising’: webpage? marketing (have a ‘mailbox’ for suggestions)
2. Keep the focus groups! (good idea)
3. “Monitor” various group listservs
4. Plan more than 1 session on a topic
5. Webpage with calendar of events - Staff Development needs a web presence

Top 2 pieces of advice from Group 2
1. Web presence
2. Calendar of events
3. Keep up focus groups
Last Thoughts
Participants were invited to note any last thoughts. The following last thoughts are recorded here verbatim.

1. Open houses on the back-end/technical services: e.g. How does cataloguing happen at ‘x’ Library? How are reserves handled at Robarts? More frequent staff choice book exhibits.

2. Thank you for organizing this focus group. I appreciate the opportunity for feedback and discussion!

3. Great session! Thanks for inviting me. It was good to meet a group of people that (with one exception) I’ve never met before.

4. Very organized; thoughtful; good use of time; allowed good discussions; Staff Development need more sessions for library technicians

5. Great session in terms of number of people and broad backgrounds; generation of great ideas.

6. Some training workshops could be offered at different levels, for example a cursory session for Outlook for those people who are computer savvy, and an in-depth session for people who are less familiar with Outlook and need more training.

7. I realize that Robarts is a convenient location for most library staff (as most staff are at Robarts) but for people from the eastern reaches of campus (Regis, SMC, etc.) it can take 25-30 minutes to get there, and 25-30 minutes to get back. That’s my lunch hour gone. So maybe the Staff Development Committee could consider having events in other locations - Saint Michael’s College, perhaps? Even Gerstein would be much more convenient.
Summary

The 8 participants in the focus group were thoughtful in their responses and enthusiastic in their participation. They appreciated the opportunity to meet with Library staff from other departments in an informal setting for a meaningful discussion.

All participants thought activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee during the past two years were either very valuable or somewhat valuable. As a group, they thought almost every activity went well and should be continued in the future.

Several themes emerged from the responses and discussions. Training was the most frequently recurring theme. Training should be timely, focused, hands-on, practical and geared to varying levels of capability. Sessions should be offered more than once, on different days of the week, and at different times during the day. Training opportunities should include both librarians and library technicians.

Information needs was another recurring theme, in particular how to find out about job-related and personal interest resources and services available at the University of Toronto. There seemed to be confusion about the overlap of training offered by ODLC, RCAT and the Library Staff Development Committee, and where to go on the website to find out about sessions offered by these three constituents. Participants also expressed a desire for information related to personal interests, for example where to purchase event tickets at a reduced price, but seemed not to know how to find the information.

Communication was also mentioned as important, especially communication within the Library system about library oriented work, for example the introduction of new software. Communication should be both electronic and face to face.

Advice from focus group participants to the Staff Development Committee centered on training and a web presence. Training sessions should be more inclusive for library technicians, and more sessions should be offered on different days of the week and should be of manageable duration. The Committee should have a web presence to provide a calendar of events, and act as a gateway to advertise and market activities.
Appendix B: Focus Group Summary Sheet, April 7, 2009
Library Staff Development Committee

Background:

Focus Group Purpose:
To find out from Library staff their ideas for job-related and personal interest activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee.

Date: Tuesday 7 April 2009 from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.
Location: 7th floor lounge, Faculty of Information

Participants: Nineteen staff members were sent signed letters on University of Toronto Library letterhead inviting them to participate. Non respondents were followed up with an email and phone call.

A total of 6 Library staff participated in the focus group, consisting of:
- 2 full time librarians
- 1 full time USWA
- 3 full time CUPE 1230

Libraries and Departments represented:
- 5 - Central Library System
- 1 - Campus Libraries

Facilitator: Jennifer Wentworth
Assistant: Richard Hydal

All participants were sent the following thank you email the same day after the focus group.

Subject: Thank You, Focus Group Participants from Session 2 (April 7, 2009)

Dear Focus Group Participants,

On behalf of the Staff Development Committee we would like to thank you for your participation in today's session. Suggestions and comments from participants will be compiled and shared with members of the Staff Development Committee, and will be valuable in planning courses, workshops and other activities in the coming year.

Thank you again for your suggestions, comments and enthusiasm.

Focus Group Sub-Committee Members
Richard Hydal (416 946-5094)
Gail Nichol (416 978-7665)
Jennifer Wentworth (416 978-1756)
Participants were given a list of activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee from 2007-2009, then voted on how valuable they thought the activities had been.

**Question 1:**
How valuable have the activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee in the past two years been?

Answers were delivered by a show of hands.
- (1) Very valuable - 1
- (2) Somewhat valuable - 3
- (3) Of little value - 1
- (4) Don’t know – 0

**Question 2:**
What are some specific activities you think go well and should be continued in the future?

Verbal responses were recorded on a flip chart and are listed in no particular order.

1. Workshops that pertain to different aspects of my job
2. ‘You are the University!’ – the theoretical component, the depth, well delivered
3. Any activity that involves staff across the board – activities should be staggered, otherwise they’re difficult for everyone to attend
4. Any activity that involves staff across the board – for example, the UTM and UTSC open houses
5. Librarian research afternoon - valuable because it gives an idea of what can be done in the future on my research leave
6. Reporting on what the University is doing – what’s on the horizon, in development, i.e. research, e-books
7. Open house tours – would like to have more than just a tour of large libraries and have a tour of things that combine my work and what others do
8. When I first got hired, I got a staff orientation, including a list of libraries to select to go to see. It was great to see others.
9. Downsview trip was valuable as now our library uses the facility and we know what they do
10. Tours of other libraries – it would be great to go to other university libraries, for example, Ryerson and York. We could visit and liaise with Toronto Reference Library

11. The term ‘librarian’ when used in workshop titles. If you are not a ‘librarian’, it has the aspect of exclusiveness. Use more generic terms such as Reference staff.

12. Terminology – look at wording. There is the ‘upstairs downstairs’ aspect to wording in the description of activities, for example in the Web 2.0 workshop. With jobs not being filled, we all do a lot of jobs.

13. Events like book fairs that are inclusive are very successful.

14. Organize/address staff development issues of staff who have been here a long time. Their needs are different than needs of new people.

15. ‘You are the University!’ – I felt talked down to, as I have been here for a longer time

16. Shorter, specific sessions due to time and scheduling
Question 3: What are some specific activities you would like to have in the future?

Verbal responses were written on a flip chart. Participants were each given 20 stickers to apply next to their favourite suggestions. Responses are listed in order by most frequently chosen suggestions of the participants.

1. A half day with Sirsi or Scholars Portal or any of our vendors and suppliers – they come in, pay for, and organize training on their products without the Library having the expense - 13 stickers; 12%; session 2

2. The future of Endeca – there are rumours of Endeca being a gateway for more than just the catalogue. Give staff a heads up versus it just appearing. Show staff what other libraries are doing or have done with Endeca - 11 stickers; 10%; session 2

3. Sharing information and experiences across functions – meet with people in other departments, for example people from acquisitions, reference and cataloguing get together - 10 stickers; 9%; session 2

4. Sharing of conference reports because others would benefit from the information. Many staff members go to conferences but experiences are often not shared. Could be simply a drop-in session with their notes and personal perspective. Time is an issue so a time-consuming preparation of a Powerpoint presentation is not necessary - 10 stickers; 9%; session 2

5. More information about Endeca - From what fields is it pulling/using information, i.e. the behind the scenes things that are happening. Have a session on the ‘back of house’ and ‘front of house’ information. Some information now showing in the public view of the catalogue should not be showing where everyone can see it - 8 stickers; 7%; session 2

6. Professional development – a session or sessions for untenured librarians on how to go about the tenure process - 8 stickers; 7%; session 2

7. RDA (Resource Description and Access) and FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records) – information sessions in advance of the rollout of these functionalities - 8 stickers; 7%; session 2

8. Microsoft Outlook – training before it was rolled out. When the previous email software was rolled out, pre-training was offered so that there was some exposure to it before staff had to use it. The software was loaded onto computers in the Library training lab and University Computing Services staff offered training sessions - 7 stickers; 6%; session 2

9. ITS drop-in sessions, which used to be held. Have one hour lunch time sessions [bring your own lunch] to answer questions about our own personal laptops to learn how to use them better. Hold some sessions at libraries other than Robarts - 7 stickers; 6%; session 2
10. TRY (Toronto Ryerson York) Conference – although this isn’t sponsored by the Staff Development Committee, a conference like this is an opportunity to mix with staff from the other two universities in the city – 7 stickers; 6%; session 2

11. More contact and communication with smaller and special/subject libraries on campus – For example, all libraries have purchasing systems. What do the smaller libraries do for purchasing? Could some functions be centralized to avoid redundancy? - 5 stickers; 5%; session 2

12. Invite a faculty member to tell the library about their needs and student needs. This creates a dialogue, a broader view and a context for us in the library - 3 stickers; 3%; session 2

13. Workshops geared to specific groups or needs – 3 stickers; 3%; session 2

14. Documents from workshops made available as it is not possible to attend all sessions and presentations. For example, vendor presentations could be put on an intranet site – 2 stickers; 2%; session 2

15. A session on human resources issues such as the hiring process and resume writing. Information presented could be of use in both work and personal life. - 2 stickers; 2%; session 2

16. Book exhibition – hook up with publishers to get them to donate books and then give the books to children through a charity or to the University day care – 2 stickers; 2%; session 2

17. Involve external charities – for example, have the Cancer Society exhibit at the Health Fair and ask people for donations; have people bring a donation of food for the Food Bank to sessions such as this focus group – 2 stickers; 2%; session 2

Total number of stickers distributed to participants in session 1: 120
Total number of stickers applied by participants in session 1: 108

Observation

Participants used 40% of the total allocated stickers on the following 4 activities they would like to have in the future. Participants indicated they want:

1) training by vendors and suppliers on their products
2) information on new software before it is rolled out
3) the opportunity to meet with staff across Library functions to share information and experiences
4) sharing of conference reports for professional development
Question 4:
What specific pieces of advice would you give to the Staff Development Committee in planning activities? Choose the top two pieces of advice.

Participants were divided into 2 groups of 3. One person recorded the opinions of the group members. Responses from each of the 2 groups are recorded here verbatim.

Responses from Group 1
1. Focus group format is well-organized and efficient. Small, so people have an opportunity to talk.
2. Open houses are a crucial component in learning about other libraries and staff. Size of UofT can be turned into a positive benefit with wealth of staff shared expertise.
3. Need to be variety in types of events, times offered, etc.
4. Wording should be more inclusive for all staff. Few instances when all staff would not benefit from a session.
5. Sessions that combine issues covering multiple functions/modules would be of benefit to “front room” and “back room” people.

Top 2 pieces of advice from Group 1
1. Open houses are a crucial component in learning about other libraries and staff. Size of UofT can be turned into a positive benefit with wealth of staff shared expertise.
2. Sessions that combine issues covering multiple functions/modules would be of benefit to “front room” and “back room” people.

Both of the above are excellent at expanding knowledge over borders.

Responses from Group 2
1. They [the Staff Development Committee] do not advertise themselves enough
2. More inclusive wording in their [Staff Development Committee] advertising of activities
3. More support from upper management or supervisors to encourage their staff to attend Staff Development Committee activities
4. Less than “1 full day” SDC workshops would be better attended, or easier for staff to attend
5. Offer SDC workshops/activities over a two-week period at least 2-3 times in that time period

Top 2 pieces of advice from Group 2
1. They [the Staff Development Committee] do not advertise themselves enough
2. Offer SDC workshops/activities over a two-week period at least 2-3 times in that time period
Last Thoughts
Participants were invited to note any last thoughts. The following last thoughts are recorded here verbatim.

1. Very informative session

2. This [focus group] worked a lot better than having staff respond electronically on a form. Thank you!

3. Being offered any workshops is greatly appreciated. A set-up similar to the one that was done today: well organized; casual and less than a day. Thank you.

4. Bigger focus group (such as 8-10 people) may generate more ideas in its process of the discussion.

5. My one other comment for the Staff Development committee is related to an experience I had last year. When the trip to Scarborough was advertised, it particularly stated that all staff, including those at campus libraries, were welcome. Up until then I had been a bit hesitant to participate in some events, like the annual bbq, and some of the bussed tours. It was nice to be invited, so I went, and had a very good time. We talked a lot about inclusion during our session, and campus library staff can be part of that effort to reach out to everyone.
Summary
The 6 participants in the focus group were thoughtful in their responses and enthusiastic in their participation.

There was a mix of opinion among participants as to the value of activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee during the past two years. Most thought activities were either very valuable or somewhat valuable. One respondent thought activities of little value. As a group, they thought open houses, activities that involve staff across the board, workshops pertaining to their jobs, and sessions on what is happening in other departments go well and should be continued in the future.

Several themes emerged from the responses and discussions. Training was the most frequently recurring theme, particularly job-related training on new software such as Endeca and Microsoft Outlook, vendor products, and new cataloguing standards. Sessions should be timely, offered more than once, on different days of the week, and at different times during the day.

The opportunity to meet and communicate with staff from other departments was another recurring theme. Open houses and small group sessions in particular allow for sharing of information and experiences across functions.

Inclusiveness was mentioned throughout the session. There is a perceived lack of inclusiveness in descriptions of and eligibility to participate in some workshops. Workshops should be geared to functionality, for example staff who work in reference services, and descriptions include more generic terms such as Reference staff.

Advice from focus group participants to the Staff Development Committee centered on campus wide sharing of expertise, and information about and timing of SDC activities. Open houses and sessions on multiple functions/modules allow staff to share expertise. The Committee should do more advertising and activities should be offered several times over a two-week period.
Appendix C: Focus Group Summary Sheet, April 14, 2009
For Library Staff Development Committee

Background:

Focus Group Purpose:
To find out from Library staff their ideas for job-related and personal interest activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee.

Date:  Tuesday 14 April 2009 from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.
Location:  7th floor lounge, Faculty of Information

Participants:  20 staff members were sent signed letters on University of Toronto Library letterhead inviting them to participate. Non respondents were followed up with an email and phone call.

A total of 7 Library staff participated in the focus group, consisting of:
- 3 full time librarians
- 3 full time USWA
- 1 non-unionized

Libraries and Departments represented:
- 2 - Central Library System
- 2 - Campus Libraries
- 3 – UTM and UTSC Libraries

Facilitator:  Jennifer Wentworth
Assistant:  Richard Hydal

All participants were sent the following thank you email the same day after the focus group.

Subject:  Thank You, Focus Group Participants from Session 2 (April 14, 2009)

Dear Focus Group Participants,

On behalf of the Staff Development Committee we would like to thank you for your participation in today's session. Suggestions and comments from participants will be compiled and shared with members of the Staff Development Committee, and will be valuable in planning courses, workshops and other activities in the coming year.

Thank you again for your suggestions, comments and enthusiasm.

Focus Group Sub-Committee Members
Richard Hydal (416 946-5094)
Gail Nichol (416 978-7665)
Jennifer Wentworth (416 978-1756)
Participants were given a list of activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee from 2007-2009, then voted on how valuable they thought the activities had been.

**Question 1:**
How valuable have the activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee in the past two years been?

Answers were delivered by a show of hands. One participant arrived late, so did not vote.

1. Very valuable - 0
2. Somewhat valuable - 6
3. Of little value - 0
4. Don’t know – 0

**Question 2:**
What are some specific activities you think go well and should be continued in the future?

Verbal responses were recorded on a flip chart and are listed in no particular order.

1. Learning 2.0 – keeping updated, because our students are familiar with the concepts
2. Tours of different departments keeps everyone involved
3. Statistics research workshop with Laine Ruus
4. Business Research with Laura Anderson
5. Research afternoon – what librarians have done during their research leave; make it a yearly event
6. Research through FADIS with Harriet Sonne de Torrens – good for knowing how to find graphic material
7. Book exhibitions – gets everyone involved
8. Open house at UTM was well organized. It was nice to see a Library that wasn’t downtown
9. e-Books with Sian – it was good to learn about the e-book packages
Question 3:
What are some specific activities you would like to have in the future?

Verbal responses were written on a flip chart. Participants were each given 20 stickers to apply next to their favourite suggestions. Responses are listed in order by most frequently chosen suggestions of the participants.

1. Open houses, specifically at Robarts - I work there but for instance don’t know where the backlog shelves of titles are. For staff at a federated college, how to connect, how do “you” do it as we all generally do the same or similar activities. For example, how is short term loan done at UTM and other libraries. For staff who don’t catalogue, it would be nice to know how it’s done at other libraries – 23 stickers; 17%; session 3

2. Orientation session for staff new to the library and university – something general, for a group, in addition to the orientation for your own job. Orientation also helps staff direct and assist patrons to locations on other campuses. Have a walking tour of the campus – 18 stickers; 13%; session 3

3. Socially related activities – for example speed networking, like speed dating, to meet colleagues. At the social event, you would spend 5 minutes talking with another person to find out which library they work in and what their job is, exchange business cards, then move on to the next person – 18 stickers; 13%; session 3

4. Research methods for librarians – assistance with how to do research for librarians, for example the methodology involved in doing research – 15 stickers; 11%; session 3

5. Graphic design for brochures – how libraries produce brochures, specifically what graphic design software, such as Photoshop, is being used now that graphics design staff is no longer available to assist with the production of brochures – 14 stickers; 10%; session 3

6. Fun things which might not be immediately beneficial at work or on the desk, but which students and patrons are using, for example Google documents, Learning 2.0 – we need to be able to recognize these applications and increase our knowledge of them as they will ask staff if they have a problem – 11 stickers; 8%; session 3

7. Training on how to present at a conference – this could include how to write conference proposals, and associated issues such as how to prepare to present and how to deal with stress – 11 stickers; 8%; session 3

8. Reference desk issues – have targeted sessions for staff who work on reference desks to discuss how staff in other libraries deal with reference desk issues, for example the recording of statistics, and the use and training of work study students to work on a reference desk – 10 stickers; 7%; session 3

9. Forums for discussion – for example how you train your students – 7 stickers; 5%; session 3
10. Regular events, monthly or bi-monthly, to meet people – I do instruction so I see the same people. I would like to branch out and this would be a way to meet people, find out what they are doing, what they are involved in. Could be orientation tours. You hear names but don’t know faces – 5 stickers; 4%; session 3

11. Management training for staff new to a management position – being a new manager, it would be nice to talk to others like me. I took the ODLC course for new managers, and would like to meet with library staff who are managers to get their perspectives and there is always a need to learn – 3 stickers; 2%; session 3

12. Having a session only once is problematic, due to scheduling issues, location, UTM, UTSC. Morning and late afternoon are better. Time of year is a consideration too – 3 stickers; 2%; session 3

13. Workshops outside your specific work requirements are good – ODLC workshops mean you can meet other people who work on campus – 1 sticker; 1%; session 3

Total number of stickers distributed to participants in session 3: 140
Total number of stickers applied by participants in session 3: 139

**Observation**

Participants used 43% of the total allocated stickers on the following 3 activities they would like to have in the future. Participants indicated they want:

1) Open houses at libraries for the opportunity to tour them and see how similar jobs are done there
2) Orientation for staff new to the library and university
3) Social activities to meet people and find out about their job
Question 4:
What specific pieces of advice would you give to the Staff Development Committee in planning activities? Choose the top two pieces of advice.

Participants were divided into 1 group of 3 and 1 group of 4. One person recorded the opinions of the group members. Responses from each of the 2 groups are recorded here verbatim.

Responses from Group 1
1. Have multiple days/times for sessions (UTSC, UTM), some have hard time attending sessions, especially if they are mid-day and academic year
2. The facilitator [of a workshop] should have training to make sessions that reflect level of skills they are teaching
3. Having session at other campuses (UTM, UTSC)
4. In –house training for all campuses
5. Build in a networking aspect at sessions (e.g.: ‘go round’ so we get to know individuals)

Top 2 pieces of advice from Group 1
1. Have multiple days/times for sessions (UTSC, UTM), some have hard time attending sessions, especially if they are mid-day and academic year
2. Build in a networking aspect at sessions (e.g.: ‘go round’ so we get to know individuals)

Responses from Group 2
1. Have more events at UTM and UTSC
2. Have various session of lectures to ensure that various people can attend – if it is at lunch time, it would be hard for individuals on other campuses to attend
3. Have events that are more inclusive – events that lend themselves to ALL library staff

Top 2 pieces of advice from Group 2
1. Scheduling things at various times
2. More inclusive versus just geared to librarians
Last Thoughts
Participants were invited to note any last thoughts. The following last thoughts are recorded here verbatim.

1. I think the work of the Staff Development Committee is central to creating community, fostering collaboration and sharing knowledge. The focus group was planned well and very interesting.

2. Enjoyed the focus group session. Again this allowed me to know others at the different campuses. Putting faces to names. I hope our collective input goes to making staff development training more diverse, better and still have fun!

3. Have a ‘suggestion’ workshop option online. If similar suggestions are being submitted then a new workshop could be designed.

4. At least once a year Orientation for any new staff and/or staff who want refreshing. UofT tours – based for staff.

5. If there’s another staff book exhibition (like “And the rest is history”), please put the titles & the ‘blurbs’ written by staff recommenders on the web. It was frustrating not being able to link to/e-mail this information.

6. The customer service workshop needs to be radically rethought so that it will actually improve customer service. Rude service must become unacceptable at UTL.

7. I would like to have more sessions open to other library staff, not just for librarians. Drop-in sessions don’t work well for staff at other campuses so consideration for multiple dates and flexible times (i.e.: early morning, late afternoon) would be good in order for those to attend.

8. This was a very valuable session! Thank you.

9. Having the focus group was a good idea as you get to learn what others are interested in and what will be useful programming for the future. I appreciate the work it takes to coordinate activities, speakers, participants, etc.

10. Have drop-in sessions, for example for Excel, in which a person can ask specific and targeted questions. These sessions would be short and not last the whole day.

11. Courses on Excel and Word 2007, for all staff. Nice to have them. Have them at various campuses too!

12. Guest speaker series related to Library. Meet library staff at all campuses.

13. Most of my, our training … is based on what we will be supporting. Many projects are initiated by other departments and then we receive the appropriate training. Also, we do a lot of self or on-the-job training. That is
when clients have support issues, we then research and apply possible solutions and then document them. I think allowing tuition waivers for courses is very useful. Covering the purchase of books, e-books, dvd training software that is job/career related is very useful. I found some courses at the School of Continuing studies to be beneficial. Time and duration was flexible which helped. Providing staff with the time/flexibility to take courses during working hours will also help. Not all courses can be taken during off work hours for a variety of reasons. [Comments received by email from an invited participant who was unable to attend]
Summary
The 7 participants in the focus group were thoughtful in their responses and enthusiastic in their participation.

All participants though activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee during the past two years were somewhat valuable. As a group, they thought workshops on specific topics, open houses at other libraries, and the staff book exhibition are activities which go well and should be continued.

Several themes emerged from the responses and discussions. Communication was the most frequently recurring theme, particularly the opportunity to visit other libraries to talk with staff to find out the ‘inner workings’ of a library. Meeting with staff to share information on staffing issues and how tasks are performed allows communication both within and across library functions.

Orientation to libraries and the university was another recurring theme. The opportunity for Library staff to find out about libraries and the university on both their home campus and on the other two campuses was seen as important in order to direct and assist patrons.

Social activities designed for participants to meet library staff with whom they don’t necessarily work was mentioned throughout the session.

Advice from focus group participants to the Staff Development Committee centered on scheduling a session on several days and at various times, and at times convenient for staff from UTM and UTSC to attend sessions on the St. George campus. Building in opportunities for networking during sessions allows individuals to get to know each other. For example, at the beginning of a workshop, have everyone introduce themselves, or have a 15 minute coffee break scheduled during or at the end of a workshop for people to mingle. Sessions should be inclusive and not geared just to librarians.
APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP OUTLINE
For Staff Development Committee

Information taken from: Simon, Judith Sharken. The Wilder nonprofit field guide to conducting successful focus groups. Saint Paul, Minn.: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1999

Step 1: Purpose
To find out from Library staff their ideas for job-related and personal interest activities sponsored by the Staff Development Committee

Step 2: Timeline and responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Done</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>By when</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1. Identify participants: name, library, email and phone number</td>
<td>jw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>2. Prepare letters</td>
<td>jw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>3. Develop the script</td>
<td>jw, rh, gn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>4. Compile list of SDC activities during past 2 years</td>
<td>jw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>5. Arrange for and reserve session sites</td>
<td>jw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>6. Send invitation letter 3 weeks in advance; after 1 week, phone non-respondents (see below for script)</td>
<td>Jw, rh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>7. Send email reminder 2 days before focus group</td>
<td>rh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>8. Gather session materials (see list below)</td>
<td>jw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>9. Conduct focus group: Session 1 – Tues 31 Mar at AMR</td>
<td>jw and rh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>10. Conduct focus group: Session 2 – Tues 7 Apr at FIS</td>
<td>Jw and rh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>11. Conduct focus group: Session 3 – Tues 14 Apr at FIS</td>
<td>Jw and rh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>12. Send thank-you email to participants</td>
<td>rh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>13. Transcribe session notes</td>
<td>jw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>14. Analyze sessions</td>
<td>jw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>15. Write report</td>
<td>jw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Script to use when phoning or emailing non-respondents 1 week after written invitations are sent out:
Hello _____________. This is Richard Hydal. I’m phoning on behalf of the Staff Development Committee to follow up on a letter to invite you to participate in a focus group. Did you receive the letter?
If the letter was not received, Richard will send an email with the letter attached.
If the letter was received, Richard will ask: Do you plan to attend the focus group?
If the person plans not to attend, Richard will ask: Do you have any comments for the Committee?

8. Session materials
1) juice and cookies
2) list of workshops held during past 2 years
3) flip chart stand – FIS room has one; AMR has four
4) flip chart paper
5) masking tape
6) markers for writing on flip chart
7) 15 pens and pencils
8) 4x6 pieces of paper – 24 per session
9) 1/2” sticker dots – 225 per session, cut into groups of 15
10) 8½ x 11 sheets of paper – 12 per session
11) small pieces of paper with numbers 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 written on them – 12 per session
12) 8½ x 11 pieces of paper, folded, with Table 1 or Table 2 or Table 3 or Table 4 written on them
13) handout for question 4: advice for SDC – 4 per session

**Step 3: Identify and invite participants**
1. Participants will be selected by the sub-committee from permanent and 50%+ University of Toronto Libraries staff. Participant selection criteria could include such characteristics as areas of expertise, employment status, library location and gender.

2. Three sessions of 10 to 12 participants each

3. Session length: 80 minutes, 10:10 to 11:30 a.m. including refreshments (juice and cookies)

4. Focus groups will be held on:
   - Session 1: Tuesday 31 March in Alice Moulton Room, Gerstein Library
   - Session 2: Tuesday 7 April in 7th floor lounge, FIS
   - Session 3: Tuesday 14 April in 7th floor lounge, FIS

   Note: rooms are booked from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
   Note: both locations have whiteboard, markers and flip chart in the room

5. Invitation – will be sent out as a letter

**Step 4: Outline of focus group sessions** (80 minutes)

**Opening** (5 minutes)
Facilitator welcomes group and introduces the session

**Question 1** (5 minutes)
Please comment on how valuable staff development activities have been during the past year.

**Question 2** (15 minutes)
What are some specific activities that you think go well and should be continued in the future?

**Question 3** (15 minutes)
What are some specific activities that you would like to have in the future?
You see everyone’s suggestions. Do any other ideas come to mind?

**Activity** (5 minutes)
If you had to select the most important activities from the entire list that was just generated, which ones would you choose?

**Question 4** (25 minutes)
What two specific pieces of advice would you give to the Staff Development Committee in planning activities?

**Closing** (10 minutes)
Facilitator invites the group to note any last thoughts on a piece of paper.
Facilitator thanks participants.
Step 5: Script for focus groups

Opening (5 minutes) 10:10-10:15

Script: Welcome and thank you for joining us. My name is Jennifer Wentworth and I will be the facilitator for today’s session. This is Richard Hydal who will be the assistant. This is one of a series of focus groups being conducted to gather information for the Staff Development Committee’s planning process. The Committee members hope that by gathering your ideas for job-related and personal interest activities, they can plan activities which are relevant to Library staff.

A focus group enables people to come together to share their opinions on a topic. Each of you is representing your own opinions. Please be as honest and open as possible in your responses. Your anonymity will be protected. Please keep information discussed here today confidential.

The results of the focus groups will help the Committee plan activities for the next year. We will move through a series of questions and should be done in about an hour. Let’s start by introducing ourselves. We’ll go around the table, and each of you can state your name and the Library department where you work.

Facilitator welcomes group and thanks them for coming, introduces self and the assistant, and explains the purpose of the focus group.
Facilitator presents the agenda for the session.
Participants introduce themselves to the rest of the group.

Question 1 (5 minutes) 10:15-10:20

Script: You each have in front of you a list of activities held during the past 2 years. Take a minute to look at it. Then, by a show of hands, we’ll record your votes on how valuable you think these activities have been:
(1) Very valuable (2) Somewhat valuable (3) Of little value (4) Don’t know

[one minute]

Script: How valuable have these activities been? A show of hands for very valuable; somewhat valuable; of little value; don’t know.
Thank you.

Each participant has a copy of the list of activities held during the past 2 years. Activities include workshops, events, open houses and exhibitions.
Assistant records votes on a flip chart.
Question 2 (15 minutes) 10:20-10:35

Script: For the next few minutes, we’ll focus on specific activities you think go well and should be continued in the future. You will have two minutes to think about a question and record your thoughts by yourself on a piece of paper. At the end of that time, we’ll ask for your comments. Richard will write them on the flip chart, taking one comment from each of you in turn until everyone has had a chance to respond. We’ll continue around the room until all comments are recorded. Here’s the question: What are some specific activities you think go well and should be continued in the future?

[2 minutes]

Script: What are some specific activities you think go well? Would you like to suggest one activity?

Facilitator poses question 1.
Assistant hands out pieces of 4x6 paper to each participant.
Participants record their thoughts by themselves on a piece of paper.
The assistant writes comments on a flip chart, taking one comment per person until everyone has had a chance to respond. Continue around the room until all comments are recorded.
Note: Head off destructive exchanges of opinion by stating there will be opportunity later in the session for discussion and to record comments.

Question 3 (15 minutes) 10:35-10:50

Script: We'll now think about specific activities you would like to have in the future. As before, you have two minutes to think about the question and record your thoughts by yourself on a piece paper. Richard will then write suggestions on the flip chart, taking one suggestion from each of you until everyone has had a chance to respond, continuing around the room until all suggestions are recorded. We'll clarify suggestions which the group thinks need clarification, and combine them if the group agrees.
The question is: What are some specific activities that you would like to have in the future?

[2 minutes]

Script: What activities would you like to have? Would you like to start by suggesting one?

Facilitator poses question 2.
Participants record their thoughts by themselves on a piece of paper.
The assistant writes suggestions on a flip chart, taking one suggestion per person until everyone has had a chance to respond. Write only 3 to 4 suggestions per sheet of paper, leaving plenty of space for stickers to be placed next to each suggestion. Continue around the room until all suggestions are recorded.
Clarify any suggestions for yourself or other participants. Combine suggestions when the group agrees they should be combined.
Staff Development Focus Groups Report

Note: Head off destructive exchanges of opinion by stating there will be opportunity later in the session for discussion and to record comments.

**Script:** You see everyone’s suggestions. Do any other ideas come to mind?

Facilitator asks participants for other suggestions.
The assistant writes comments on a flip chart.

**Activity** (5 minutes) 10:50-10:55

**Script:** We’ll now ask you to look at the entire list of suggestions just generated and to select those most important to you. Richard will give each of you stickers to put next to your favourite suggestion or suggestions. How much you like an activity can be reflected by how many stickers you place beside it. For example, you could put all stickers next to one suggestion, or spread them out over several suggestions.

Take a minute to look at the list. When you’re ready, you may go and put stickers next to your choice of most important activities.

Facilitator poses question 3.
The assistant gives each participant 20 stickers to place beside their favourite suggestion or suggestions for activities.
Participants are instructed go to flip chart pages to place stickers.

While participants are placing stickers, the assistant prepares the room for the next activity. Participants will be divided into groups of 3 or 4. The assistant goes around the table placing a piece of paper in front of each person. Each piece of paper will be numbered 1 or 2 or 3 or 4. The assistant will also place a sign on each of 4 tables. Signs read: Table 1 or Table 2 or Table 3 or Table 4.
**Question 4** (25 minutes) 10:55-11:20

**Script:** For the next activity we'll ask you to assemble into groups of three or four. In front of each of you is a piece of paper with a number on it. Those with number 1 will assemble at Table 1, number 2 at Table 2, and so on. One of you can be the reporter to write down ideas generated by the group on the paper provided.

Your task is to think about what specific pieces of advice you would give to the Committee when planning activities. You will have 10 minutes for discussion and recording of ideas, then we'll come together to record the top two pieces of advice from each group. We would like to collect the papers.

You may now move to your assigned table.

[10 minutes]

**Script:** What advice would you give the Staff Development Committee? Would you like to offer one piece of advice?

Facilitator poses question 4.

Participants assemble into groups of three. The teams appoint a reporter to write down ideas generated by the group.

Teams are asked to discuss advice for the SDC in planning activities and to decide on their top two pieces of advice. Tell them the papers will be collected.

Teams report back. Advice is recorded on the flip chart.

**Closing** (10 minutes) 11:20-11:30

**Script:** Richard will give each of you a sheet of paper to note any last thoughts you have. These could include something not covered or something you want the Staff Development Committee to know about. On behalf of the Committee, we thank you again for taking time to attend today's session and for your participation.

Suggestions and comments from participants will be compiled and shared with members of the Staff Development Committee, and will be valuable in planning courses, workshops and other activities in the coming year.

The assistant hands each participant a blank sheet of paper.

Facilitator invites the group to note any last thoughts on the paper.

Facilitator thanks participants.
Dear

The Staff Development Committee addresses the continuing education and development needs of all Library staff. The Committee is making plans for the next academic year, and wants to identify relevant job-related and personal interest activities to sponsor.

An important step in this process is to hear from people like you. Because your opinions are important to us, we invite you to participate in a focus group on \( \text{(date)} \) from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. in \( \text{(location)} \). The focus group will last about an hour and a half. Juice and cookies will be available.

We hope you will be able to attend the focus group session so we can hear your thoughts. Before responding to this request to participate, you should consult with your supervisor regarding the appropriateness of the day and time. If this date is not suitable, you can contact Jennifer Wentworth to inquire about an alternate date.

Please respond by email to Richard Hydal at richard.hydal@utoronto.ca to let us know if you will or will not attend. In the subject line of the email put ‘Focus group’.

On behalf of the Staff Development Committee, we thank you for your assistance with our plans for the future. Please phone one of the Committee members if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Richard Hydal (416 946-5094)
Gail Nichol (416 978-7665)
Jennifer Wentworth (416 978-1756)

Staff Development Committee
University of Toronto Libraries
Activities sponsored by Staff Development Committee 2007-2009

GIS research 101 (May 24, 2007) – Marcel Fortin presented a 1 hour workshop for librarians on the Geographic Information System

Statistics research 101 (May 25, 2007) – Laine Ruus presented a 1 hour workshop for librarians on statistics

Business research 101 (May 31, 2007) – Laura Anderson and Sean Forbes presented a 1 hour workshop for librarians on Library resources in business

Lowdown on e-books at UofT (June 5, 2007) - Sian Meikle presented a 1 hour workshop on the big picture of e-books at UofT Libraries and how they fit together with our traditional collections

Staff book exhibition (July to August 2007) – fourth annual staff exhibition, “Seas of ink: an exhibition of books by Canadians”, featured books recommended by UofT Library staff

Open House at the University of Toronto Mississauga Library (July 11, 2007) – staff at UTM Library offered tours of the new Hazel McCallion Academic Learning Centre; lunch was provided

Healthy Workplace Week – A healthy breakfast was held for Library staff as part of the University’s Healthy Workplace Week (October 22, 2007)

LibQual (January 11, 2008) – Lari Langford presented a 1 hour workshop on the LibQual survey, providing background on the survey and explaining the results for UofT libraries

Preparing and presenting powerful presentations (February 20, 2008) - a 1.5 hour workshop of interest to staff who were scheduled to present at the staff conference; workshop was led by Christina Tooulias-Santolin, George Zhao, Sian Meikle, Gail Nichol, Richard Hydal and Edith Sinclair

Open house at the Architecture Library (February 21 2008) – a tour of the Shore + Moffat Library at the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design with staff on hand to explain key services and answer questions

Health fair 2008 (March 27, 2008) – demonstrations on Body Care Recipes from your kitchen, Green Clean: how to make cleaning products from basic household supplies, Iridology Explained, and Delectable Desserts from plant sources; treatments such as massage therapy; a fashion show with used, recycled and hemp clothing

You are the University! Exceptional customer service (June, July, October, November 2008) – Diana Kawarsky of Soft-Skills.ca, conducted one-day workshops for front-line staff and supervisors focusing on the changes in user expectations for customer service

Staff book exhibition (July to August, 2008) – fifth annual staff exhibition, “And the rest is history”, featured books with a history theme recommended by UofT Library staff

Open house at University of Toronto Scarborough Library (July 17, 2008) – staff at UTSC Library provided tours of the Library; lunch was provided

FADIS (Fine Art Digital Imaging System) workshop (October 2, 2008) – Harriet Sonne de Torrens presented a 1 hour workshop for librarians who have liaison contacts with faculty in disciplines that use graphic materials to teach, for example botany, architecture and medicine

Prepared for the University of Toronto Libraries Staff Development Committee by Jennifer Wentworth and Richard Hydal (April 2009)
Healthy Workplace Month (October 2008) – Several Library events were held as part of the University’s Healthy Workplace Month: two presentations from the Health Fair were repeated in a one hour event: Body Care Recipes and Green Clean (October 8, 2008); a one hour workshop on Iridology Explained (October 15, 2008); Healthy breakfast (October 20, 2008)

Open house at Gerstein Science Information Centre (October 23, 2008) – volunteers from the Gerstein Library conducted tours of the newly restored Gerstein Reading room and renovated staff offices, group study rooms and graduate student offices

Safety sessions (weeks of October 27 and November 3, 2008) – a series of one and two hour safety sessions were given by Bill Godoy to Library staff on Crisis Intervention, Employee Health and Safety, Emergency Procedures, Back Care, and Ergonomics

Librarians Research Afternoon (January 15, 2009) – a 2.5 hour event for librarians to hear overviews of research projects from seven of their colleagues

Learning 2.0 (January through April 2009) – a 3 month program for librarians to learn about and discuss Web 2.0 services such as wikis, social networking, blogs and folksonomies
Advice for Staff Development Committee

What specific pieces of advice would you give to the Staff Development Committee in planning activities?

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

From the list generated above, choose the top two pieces of advice

1. 

2. 

Prepared for the University of Toronto Libraries Staff Development Committee
by Jennifer Wentworth and Richard Hydal (April 2009)
Preparation of flip chart sheets

Before each session, write the following on the flip chart, one message per sheet

Opening
Welcome to the Focus Group

Question 1
How valuable have these activities been?
(1) Very valuable
(2) Somewhat valuable
(3) Of little value
(4) Don’t know

Question 2
What are some specific activities you think go well and should be continued in the future?

Question 3
What are some specific activities that you would like to have in the future?

Question 4
What specific pieces of advice would you give to the Staff Development Committee in planning activities? Choose the top two pieces of advice.
Thank you email to focus group participants

Dear Focus Group Participants,

On behalf of the Staff Development Committee we would like to thank you for your participation in today’s session. Suggestions and comments from participants will be compiled and shared with members of the Staff Development Committee, and will be valuable in planning courses, workshops and other activities in the coming year.

Thank you again for your suggestions, comments and enthusiasm;

Focus Group Sub-Committee Members

Richard Hydal (416 946-5094)  
Gail Nichol (416 978-7665)  
Jennifer Wentworth (416 978-1756)