

South Central Regional Library Council

The Education and Training Plan, 2005-2007

SCRLC Mission Statement

The South Central Regional Library Council affirms that equal opportunity to participate in our country's economic, political, and social life depends upon equal access to information; and the South Central Regional Library Council affirms that libraries and library systems are the most appropriate means for ensuring this access.

The South Central Regional Library Council will serve libraries by:

- Encouraging collaboration and resource sharing
- Leading and challenging libraries to superior service
- Advocating for libraries within society.

Executive Summary

The 2000-2003 Education and Training Plan had five objectives that helped to expand and enrich the SCRLC Education and Training Program. We have made great progress toward each of those objectives. Some of them are still quite relevant, and continue to be included in this plan along with several new and exciting challenges.

For the next several years we will work toward the following objectives that will support the Council's strategic plan:

1. Offer education programs in a variety of formats, as well as seek new opportunities for continuing education.
2. Identify and test regionally, distance learning technologies and strategies to offer innovative educational opportunities for all members of the Council.
3. Improve and market the SCRLC library resources for education and training and staff development.
4. Expand regional opportunities for continuing education by actively supporting and marketing collaborative and cosponsored events by libraries and systems within the region, with other NY3Rs regions, and statewide.
5. Develop alternative opportunities for professional and leadership development.
6. Explore and evaluate both new and traditional means of marketing CE opportunities to effectively reach regional and statewide library staff who are unaware of SCRLC's services and programs.

Introduction

The Education and Training Program of SCRLC is one of our best known and most used services. In order to continue to best serve our members' needs, the Education and Training Committee has sought input from the membership in the form of surveys, regional meetings, and evaluations. This plan for 2005-2007 is designed to complement the strategic plan of the Council and support the mission statement of the organization.

The size and geography of this region have always made it difficult to schedule programs that are conveniently located for all of our members. Centrally located workshops may be a significant distance from the more rural areas of the region. Reductions in staff and reduced travel budgets continue to impact the ability of participants to attend workshops. Over the past three years, we have made efforts to solve these problems by trying new locations, offering national teleconferences with local discussion opportunities, providing computer-based training, and by developing turnkey training for hospital libraries. We have also collaborated with other NY3Rs to bring nationally known presenters to our area at affordable rates.

Many types of training have benefited from the flexibility of the WOW (Workshops on Wheels) mobile training lab. Topics including plagiarism, legal resources, new technologies (XML, Cascading Style Sheets), and database searching have been more effectively experienced and learned, thanks to SCRLC's ability to expand lectures with hands-on exercises at locations throughout the region.

The workshops you have been offering have been great and really meet the needs I have.

I learned so much that I will take back to our teaching librarians.

Demographics

The population that SCRLC serves is varied. The sizes and types of libraries run the gamut from very large academic libraries to one-person special libraries. It also includes other systems or consortia of libraries. Although a large segment of regional library staff is very experienced, we are aware that reorganizations and downsizings have changed the tasks and responsibilities of those long-time employees. More over, the high proportion of mature staff indicates that young staff members will be joining the force in increasing numbers and with rapidly increasing responsibility levels. Many of these newcomers will have very sophisticated technology skills, and bring fresh approaches to library services. They will, however, need grounding in supervisory and managerial strategies to garner necessary support and manage the changes they envision.

The Education and Training needs of the region are as varied as the population and experiences of the membership. It is an ongoing challenge to develop programs that meet members' needs from the most basic training to very advanced applications and concepts.

Because of the influx of staff from non-library backgrounds, we are experiencing renewed interest in classic library science topics such as cataloging. As people are promoted and assume supervisory and administrative responsibilities, interest increases in managerial and business issues, such as assessment, marketing, and project management.

Cost factors

Libraries are faced with limited budgets for travel and professional development. Along with this, reductions in staffing make it difficult to get away from the library. These are some of our greatest challenges to overcome because they are external factors over which we have no control.

The cost of speakers and local arrangements for workshops continues to increase. Therefore, we must pass these costs on to participants. In ongoing efforts to minimize participant costs, we have sought grant funding to offset the cost of training. This has been very successful. We will continue to pursue funding and cosponsorship wherever possible to subsidize workshops and training. Advance notice of upcoming workshops and training can help participants make wise choices that will meet their needs and their budget. We have intensified our use of electronic advertising via listservs and established a statewide calendar to enhance access to opportunities in other areas.

[Continuing Education is] encouraged with no monetary support.

...with fewer staff, fewer staff are able to attend.

Six Objectives for the Education and Training Program

1. Continue to offer education programs in a variety of formats, as well as seek new opportunities for continuing education.

The overall goal for the Education and Training Program of SCRLC is to meet members' needs taking into consideration different types of libraries, various staffing levels, and varying professional experience.

Results of the 2003 E&T Survey indicate that three categories of training were requested in almost identical numbers: library science, library administration and planning, and computer science and applications. Therefore we will try to balance SCRLC continuing education events in similar proportions. Speakers and topics will be identified through participant evaluations, E&T Advisory Committee recommendations, and environmental scanning.

Action Use SCRLC Reports and the LakeNet.org site to provide appropriate educational content on topics that benefit from written presentation.

Action Explore new technologies and identify those which can cost-effectively facilitate electronic collaboration and learning for special interest groups, communities of practice, and networking among geographically distant participants.

Action Identify and work to address issues that prevent regional library staff from taking advantage of cost- and time-effective training options, such as teleconferences and web-based seminars.

I have been exceptionally pleased with any programme I have attended with SCRLC and look forward to more opportunities to learn from the excellent speakers you bring in.

2. Continue to develop innovative distance learning solutions.

The initial response to our recent program, “ColdFusion” has been very positive. This grant-funded hybrid learning project incorporates a CD-ROM for computer-based learning and a server-based area for skills practice for a one-year period.

Another grant-funded effort created a suite of continuing education web pages offering links to significant library-related training and certification sites. Credit and non-credit programs were included to provide a single on-going site for access to hundreds of library-oriented resources.

The 2003 survey results showed that respondents did not share a common understanding of distance learning terminology and techniques. That understanding must be established through SCRLC Reports and training, before meaningful discussion can take place about what types of distance learning will serve them effectively.

Action Maintain and augment learning resources such as the Continuing Education pages of links.

Action Explore opportunities to try learning management software, web-based training tools, etc. which might be successfully used for SCRLC training.

Action Through publication on LakeNet.org, and training opportunities, help our members establish a common vocabulary and understanding of distance learning tools, software, and techniques.

Would like to see more [distance learning] offerings.

Any way to get nationally recognized leaders to share their thoughts, approaches, etc. with us should be explored.

3. Improve and market the SCRLC library resources for education and training and staff development.

SCRLC has created a small professional development library collection that has been catalogued in OCLC and is available for interlibrary loan. The goal is to create a collection of professional

development materials that many of the libraries in the region may not have in their own collections.

Action Create a collection development plan and budget; assign the responsibility for developing this collection, and explore opportunities for increasing its use by SCRLC member library staff.

Action Catalog new acquisitions and add them to OCLC.

Action Advertise new materials on the Web pages and through the newsletter.

4. Expand regional opportunities for continuing education by actively supporting and marketing collaborative and cosponsored events by libraries and systems within the region, as well as with other NY3Rs regions and statewide.

SCRLC's members have benefited from several recent collaborations with other NY3Rs to bring nationally known presenters to our region, by sharing transportation costs and negotiating discounted presenter fees.

Action Take advantage of cosponsorship and collaborative opportunities with other NY3Rs and organizations to expand member access to high-quality continuing education opportunities.

Action Encourage libraries within the region to share advertising and sponsorship of events of common interest in order to expand their audience and minimize costs.

5. Develop alternative opportunities for professional development and leadership.

We have had great success in cooperating with other professional groups to host professional conferences and workshops closer to the region. In the past three years we have provided conference and seminar coordination services for the Academic Directors' Biennial Conference, the NY3Rs' Continuous Assessment Continuous Improvement project, and the 2004 SUNYLA conference to bring such opportunities closer to the SCRLC region. We will continue with these efforts.

Serving on SCRLC Advisory Committees offers opportunities for leadership. SCRLC promotes the participation of members in other regional organizations such as NYLA, UNYOC, and NYSLAA.

SCRLC facilitates formation of meetings for information sharing such as the recently formed Electronic Resources Special Interest Group. Groups can meet several times a year to discuss issues or hear a program decided upon by the group. Electronic discussion lists may be created to encourage communication within the groups or without the face-to-face meeting component.

- Action* Seek new opportunities for professional development through the introduction and support of special interest groups for the region.
- Action* Promote leadership opportunities through active participation on SCRLC committees.
- Action* Continue to seek out partnerships with other organizations.

6. Explore both new and traditional means of marketing CE opportunities to effectively reach regional and statewide library staff who are unaware of SCRLC’s services and programs.

With the rising expenses of publishing and mailing paper catalogs and flyers, SCRLC now predominantly uses listservs and electronic postings to promote our CE offerings. However, many library staff are “out of the [electronic] loop” unless other media guide them to our computer-based listings, flyers, and alerts.

We have intensified our marketing efforts to promote our CE programs electronically using regional and statewide listserv postings, as well as the NY Library CE calendar.

- Action* We will create and distribute posters publicizing SCRLC and its LakeNet.org website for schedules, descriptions, and registration information for continuing education events and the electronic **SCRLC Reports** newsletter.
- Action* Continue to advertise SCRLC’s events in as many media as possible, including paper flyers and catalogs when economically feasible.