TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE, TRAINING FOR NOW
Student Assistants at the Sonoma State University Library

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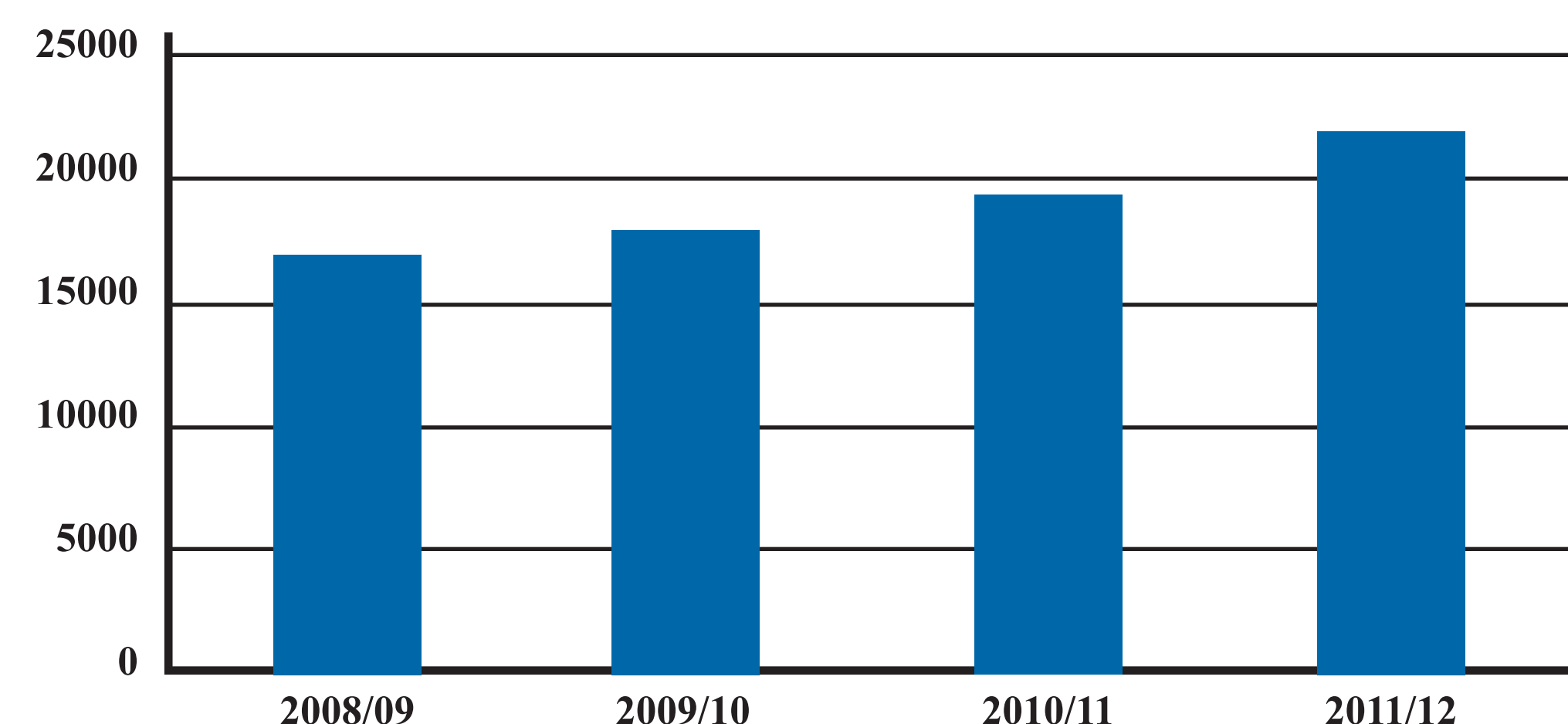Public Services Librarian • nicole.lawson@sonoma.edu

Creating a Cross-Trained Student Workforce

Analysis
The Library Student Workforce

Six library departments used a total of 21,632 Student Assistant hours in 2012, which was a 24% increase over 2008.

Library-Wide Summary SA Hours / FY Totals

- Student Assistants were under-utilized in most areas because many tasks occurred on a periodic basis throughout the day, week and semester.
- The Library had difficulty hiring and retaining students for repetitive, sometimes tedious work, like shelving.
- Students Assistants reported that they wanted the opportunity to work in more areas of the library and gain a greater variety of skills.
- The Library needed to expand assistance beyond the service desks without increasing staff or student hours.

Program Reboot
New Student Assistant Program

- Students are hired for library work under a new universal job description in Fall 2013.
- Students rotate through all of the following roles throughout the week:
  - 1st Floor Information Desk
  - Information/Check-Out Desk
  - Rover A, B, and C positions based at Information Desks and in the Library Administrative Office

Training

The foundation of the program is a hybrid training model that runs each semester.

In-Person
- Six training stations set up throughout the Library that highlight important services.
- Provide hands-on, scenario-based training and connections with staff in each area.
- Introduce students to Moodle course.
- Conduct emergency training.

Online
- Moodle course includes four sections:
  - Top 10 Things You Need to Know
  - Circulation
  - Roving
  - Administrivia

- Within six weeks students complete quizzes at the end of each course section. They may retake them until they score 100%.
- Returning students view video refreshers on Customer Service and ARS tasks.

Student Assistant Feedback

In Fall 2014 we conducted two focus groups and a survey to gauge student perception of the new program:

- Preferred style was in-person for both group and on-the-job training.
- Least liked were one-time trainings and some version of "someone over your shoulder".
- Online training was most beneficial as a supplement or refresher.
- Generally, students could not articulate how library work would prepare them for future employment. We are creating a workshop program to address this gap.