Who Manages the Library?: The Role of the Paraprofessional

by Val Wallace

The roles of paraprofessionals have expanded to include duties once considered the sole responsibility of librarians. For instance, Library Assistant I level positions often include duties having the greatest similarity to the highest level of the clerical classification scheme. Librarians and Library Technicians, on the other hand, may wonder what their role in the organization is if paraprofessionals are performing these tasks. For some librarians, as for some paraprofessionals, this leads to questioning whether their role is being redefined. Managers who are cognizant of the important role paraprofessionals are playing in libraries or they may contribute very specialized expertise in managing libraries or they may contribute very specialized expertise in the management of technical services. Paraprofessionals administer major functional areas of our libraries, are able to manage major functional areas of our libraries, are able to manage technology tools to access information, and are able to manage change in academic libraries. Librarians, on the other hand, may wonder what their role in the organization is if paraprofessionals are performing these tasks. For some librarians, as for some paraprofessionals, this leads to questioning whether their role is being redefined.