



Succession Plan

Draft November 2023

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Executive Director Succession Plan for Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)

Leadership plays an essential role in the success of RAILS and its members, and a change in executive leadership is as inevitable as the passing of time.

This document will help RAILS recognize that planning for planned or unplanned temporary leadership change is a best practice – in line with our Strategic Plan to provide leadership, model best practices and prepare for the future. A Succession Plan can bring order in a time of turmoil, confusion, and high stress.

Introduction

The Board of Directors of RAILS recognizes that this is a plan for contingencies due to the absence, death or departure of the Executive Director. If an organization is faced with the unlikely event of an untimely vacancy, RAILS has in place the following succession plan to facilitate the transition to both Acting and longer-term leadership.

The RAILS Board of Directors has reviewed the job description of the Executive Director. The job description is attached. The board has a clear understanding of the Executive Director's role in organizational leadership, program development, program administration, operations, board of directors' relationships, financial operations, resource development and community presence.

Succession Plan in Event of a Temporary, Planned Absence: Short Term

A temporary absence is one of three months or less, unless otherwise authorized, in which it is expected that the Executive Director will return to his/her position once the events precipitating the absence are resolved. The Executive Director will be responsible for the following prior to going on leave:

- Distribution of duties
- Governance representation and committee work
- Strategic plan objectives
- Administration responsibilities
- Accounting and Payroll approval responsibilities
- Temporary assignment of Acting Director current duties

The Executive Director will develop a separate detailed operation plan prior to his/her absence for Executive Committee review.

Succession Plan in Event of a Temporary, Unplanned Absence: Short Term

A temporary absence is one of less than three months in which it is expected that the Executive Director will return to his/her position once the events precipitating the absence are resolved. If the temporary absence of the Executive Director is unplanned, the Executive Committee of RAILS is authorized to implement the terms of this succession plan.

In the event of an unplanned absence of the Executive Director, the Associate Executive Director (or other highest ranking staff member) is to immediately inform the Board President (or Vice President if the President is unreachable) of the absence. As soon as it is feasible, the President should convene a meeting of the Executive Committee to affirm the procedures prescribed in this plan or to make modifications as the Committee deems appropriate.

At the time that this plan was approved, in the event of a planned or unplanned temporary absence, the position of Acting Executive Director would be:

Joe Filapek, Associate Executive Director

Should the standing appointee to the position of Acting Executive Director be unable to serve, the first and second back-up appointees for the position of Acting Executive Director will be:

- 1) Anne Slaughter, Director of Technology
- 2) Sharon Swanson, Finance Manager

If this Acting Executive Director is new to his/her position and fairly inexperienced with this organization, less than three years, the Executive Committee may decide to appoint one of the back-up appointees to the acting executive position. The Executive Committee may also consider the option of splitting executive duties among the designated appointees.

Authority and Compensation of the Acting Executive Director

The person appointed as Acting Executive Director shall have the full authority for decision-making and independent action as the regular Executive Director.

The Acting Executive Director may be offered:

- A temporary salary increase to the entry-level salary of the Executive Director position
- A bonus of \$ _____ during the Acting Executive Director Period.
- No addition compensation.

Board Oversight

The board member responsible for monitoring the work of the Acting Executive Director shall be the President. The President will be sensitive to the special support needs of the Acting Executive Director in this temporary leadership role.

Communications Plan

Immediately upon transferring the responsibilities to the Acting Executive Director, the President will notify staff members, members of the Board of Directors and key volunteers of the delegation of authority.

As soon as possible after the Acting Executive Director has begun covering the unplanned absence, Board members and the Acting Executive Director shall communicate the temporary leadership structure to the following key external supports of RAILS, including but not limited to: Illinois State Library, attorney, accountant, auditor, bank, insurance provider, Illinois Library Association, AISLE, CARLI, Illinois Heartland Library System, LLSAPs.

Completion of Short-Term Emergency Succession Period

The decision about when the absent Executive Director returns to lead RAILS should be determined by the Executive Director and the Board President. They will decide upon a mutually agreed upon schedule and start date. A reduced schedule for a set period of time can be allowed, by approval of the Board President, with the intention of working their way back up to a full-time commitment.

Succession Plan in Event of a Temporary Absence: Long Term

A long-term planned or unplanned absence is one that is expected to last more than three months. The procedures and conditions to be followed should be the same as for a short-term absence with one addition:

The Executive Committee will give immediate consideration, in consultation with the Acting Executive Director, to temporarily filling the management position left by the Acting Executive Director. This is in recognition of the fact that for a term of more than three months, it may not be reasonable to expect the Acting Executive Director to carry the duties of both positions. The position description of a temporary manager would focus on covering the priority areas in which the Acting Executive Director needs assistance.

If a planned short-term leave turns into a long-term leave, Executive Committee will discuss the need for an Interim Director or temporary management position as soon as they are made aware that the amount of leave needed has changed.

Determination if an Interim Executive Director is Needed

The criteria that the Board and Acting Executive Director should consider when determining whether to hire an Interim Executive Director (or consultant to the Acting Executive Director) are as follows:

1. Time of year
2. Required fiscal responsibilities
3. Special projects currently in progress or upcoming

Completion of Long-Term Emergency Succession Period

The decision about when the absent Executive Director returns to lead RAILS should be determined by the Executive Director and the Board President. They will decide upon a mutually agreed upon schedule and start date. A reduced schedule for a set period of time can be allowed, by approval of the Board President, with the intention of working the way up to a full-time commitment.

Succession Plan in Event of a Permanent Change in Executive Director

A permanent change is one in which it is firmly determined that the Executive Director will not be returning to the position. The procedures and conditions should be the same as for a long-term temporary absence with one addition:

Executive Committee will operate as a Transition and Search Committee within 180 days to plan and carry out a transition to a new permanent executive director. The Committee will also consider the need for outside consulting assistance depending on the circumstances of the transition and the board's capacity to plan and manage the transition and search. The Executive Committee will also determine the need for an Acting Executive Director, and plan for the recruitment and selection of an Acting Executive Director and/or permanent Executive Director.

Checklist for Acceptance of All Types of Succession Plans

- **Succession plan approval.** This succession plan will be approved by the Executive Committee and forwarded to the full Board for its review. This plan should be reviewed annually by Executive Committee.
- **Signatories.** The Board President, the Executive Director, appointees designated in this plan shall sign this plan.
- **Organizational Charts.** Two organizational charts need to be prepared and attached to this plan. Prepare and attach an organizational chart reflecting staffing positions and lines of authority/reporting throughout the organization. Prepare and attach a second organizational chart that reflects how that structure will change within the context of an absence of the Executive Director.
- **Important Organizational Information.** Complete the attached Information and Contact Inventory and attach it to this document. Also attach a current list of the organization's board of directors.
- **Copies.** Copies of this Emergency Succession Plan along with the corresponding documentation shall be maintained by the Board President, the Executive Director, The Acting Executive Director appointee, the human resources department, and the organization's attorney.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS
FY 2023-2024**

PRESIDENT

Alex Vancina
New Lenox Public Library District
Public Library Trustee
Term Ends: June 30, 2026

VICE PRESIDENT

Gwen Gregory
Northern Illinois University
Academic Library
Term Ends: June 30, 2026

TREASURER

Karen Voitik
Shorewood-Troy Public Library
District
Public Library Trustee
Term Ends: June 30, 2024

SECRETARY

Julie Milavec
Downers Grove Public Library
At Large
Term Ends: June 30, 2025

MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Rene Leyva
Fossil Ridge Public Library District
At Large
Term Ends: June 30, 2025

Position Title: Executive Director

Description Type: New Revised

Department/Unit: Administrative Services

FLSA Status: Exempt Non-exempt

Position Classification: Library Professionals

Pay Grade: Board Determined

Reporting Relationship:

Reports to (Title): RAILS Board of Directors

List of direct reports (by Title): Applicable Not Applicable

- Associate Executive Director
- Director, Marketing and Communication Services
- Finance Manager
- Director, Technology Services
- Data Analysis Manager
- Executive Assistant

Position Summary:

The Executive Director is responsible for providing executive leadership in the overall administration and management of a multi-type library System that serves more than 1200 specialized, public, school, and academic library members, which have a total of more than 4200 library facilities in a 27,000 square mile area. The Executive Director maintains a system-wide, statewide, national and global perspective consistent with the Mission Statement and Strategic Plan of the Library System and formulates an overall strategic vision for the system. The Executive Director works closely with the System Board and member libraries to develop and implement services responsive to member needs. In partnership with the Associate Executive Director and other members of the Executive Team, builds and fosters a success oriented, member focused, innovative and accountable organization.

Core Job Functions:

- Acts as the principle of the RAILS leadership team in the overall operations and directing the planning, implementation, and evaluation of all RAILS services and operations
- Leads, participates in, and delegates planning activities for all phases of the library System's operations
- Works to assure System service programs are efficient, effective and respected by all multi-type member libraries; Employs a collaborative approach to carrying out duties and responsibilities
- Coordinates and directs System staff in developing programs designed to help member libraries achieve their goals; Delegates responsibility for various aspects of System programs as appropriate, and works effectively with System staff, member library directors and Illinois library leaders in problem solving and decision making
- Bears final authority and responsibility for staff recruitment, evaluations and promotions, discipline management and terminations, as well as all other personnel matters in accordance with System policies; Bears responsibility for maintaining written System personnel evaluation records; Establishes and maintains a human resources system for personnel
- Works with system staff and member libraries to plan and implement quality and desirable service programs
- Serves as the communication link between Board and System staff, as appropriate
- Interprets Board policies to System staff and provides staff support in the execution of such policies; Advises and provides recommendations to the Board on the need for new or revised policies; Advises Board on plans and concepts for current and future policy revisions
- Prepares and submits to the Board recommendations and reports relative to all matters requiring Board action;

- Ensures communications include necessary and helpful information as needed to ensure informed decision making
- With System staff, implements the policies of the System Board and the Plan of Services as defined in Illinois statute and administrative rules
- Assists the President in calling meetings and special meetings of the Board of Directors; Prepares agenda and reviews minutes for Board meetings
- Attends System, regional and state committee meetings; Plans, promotes and facilitates System-wide meetings;
- Ensures compliance of all library System activities with the provisions of the Library Systems Act and regulations of the Illinois State Library
- Responsible for preparation and management of the annual budget; Supervises preparation and presentation of the monthly and annual financial reporting, and brings financial recommendations and budget concerns to the Board in a timely manner; Provides for participation of System staff in budget preparation, and supervises alternate revenue sources
- Signs contracts for services and grants; Certifies bills and monies expended by countersigning checks and managing expenditures
- Ensures completion of annual audit as recommended by the Board
- Supervises processes needed for, and facilitates evaluation of, building and equipment maintenance and replacement Represents the System and its membership in civic, educational, and library affairs in the System area and its relations at state and national levels;
- Works with the state legislature on library funding and relevant legislation affecting libraries; Assists with the development, oversight and promotion of approved legislative functions to member libraries on the state level; Promotes advocacy efforts on library legislation and assists with implementation of state laws as relevant to libraries; Promotes the System and its member libraries throughout the state and serves as System spokesperson to the press
- Contributes to professional development of librarianship; Informs self on educational, political, legal, technological and sociological trends as they apply to librarianship; Is vigilant of emerging library trends within the System and its member libraries, and promotes such trends where appropriate
- Promotes improvement of libraries and library services through the establishment of standards for and evaluation of services
- Promotes library services to un-served and underserved areas of the System, and helps to develop new programs consistent with changing environments; Works to further the growth of library services throughout the System area, and to encourage improvements for member library services as well; Promotes participation in System-wide programs; Acts as liaison with member libraries and serves as consultant in appropriate areas
- Promotes productive cooperation among member libraries and other library Systems or agencies; Contributes to the elevation of library cooperative concept
- Works to maximize the System's grant support; Delegates administrative supervision of special projects and grants as appropriate
- Other duties as assigned by the RAILS Board of Directors

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Education -

- MLS Degree from an ALA accredited library school

Knowledge/Experience -

- Minimum of ten years progressively responsible library management experience, with five years at the senior and/or executive level including supervision of professional and supervisory staff
- Knowledge of and experience working with the Illinois legislative process affecting libraries
- Knowledge of principles and practices of library System administration
- Hands on experience in long range planning and budgeting
- Proven experience of operating and influencing within a political environment

Skills/Abilities –

- Ability to create an effective senior management team to oversee 100 or more staff over multiple locations
- Ability to create a cohesive corporate culture for the system
- Ability to envision problem solutions and define critical paths to reach those solutions
- Strong ability for negotiation and effective conflict resolution
- Capacity to be responsive and empathetic to member library needs
- Organizational skills; ability to delegate authority, supervise and lead staff effectively at multiple, remote sites
- Strong verbal and written communication skills: ability to concisely summarize essential needs to the System Board, System staff, state legislators and member libraries; ability to disseminate information in a concise, timely manner and in a format that is friendly to the Board and member libraries
- Capability for regional and statewide travel on a regular basis

Working Conditions and Physical Requirements

- Work takes place in a typical office environment.
- Must be able to travel locally to attend meetings, conferences, and events. Occasional overnight travel is required to domestic locations.
- Valid Illinois Driver's License with a clean driving record
- Ability to communicate in person via phone, video conference, and electronic mail

Position Description Updated on: 6/15/2022

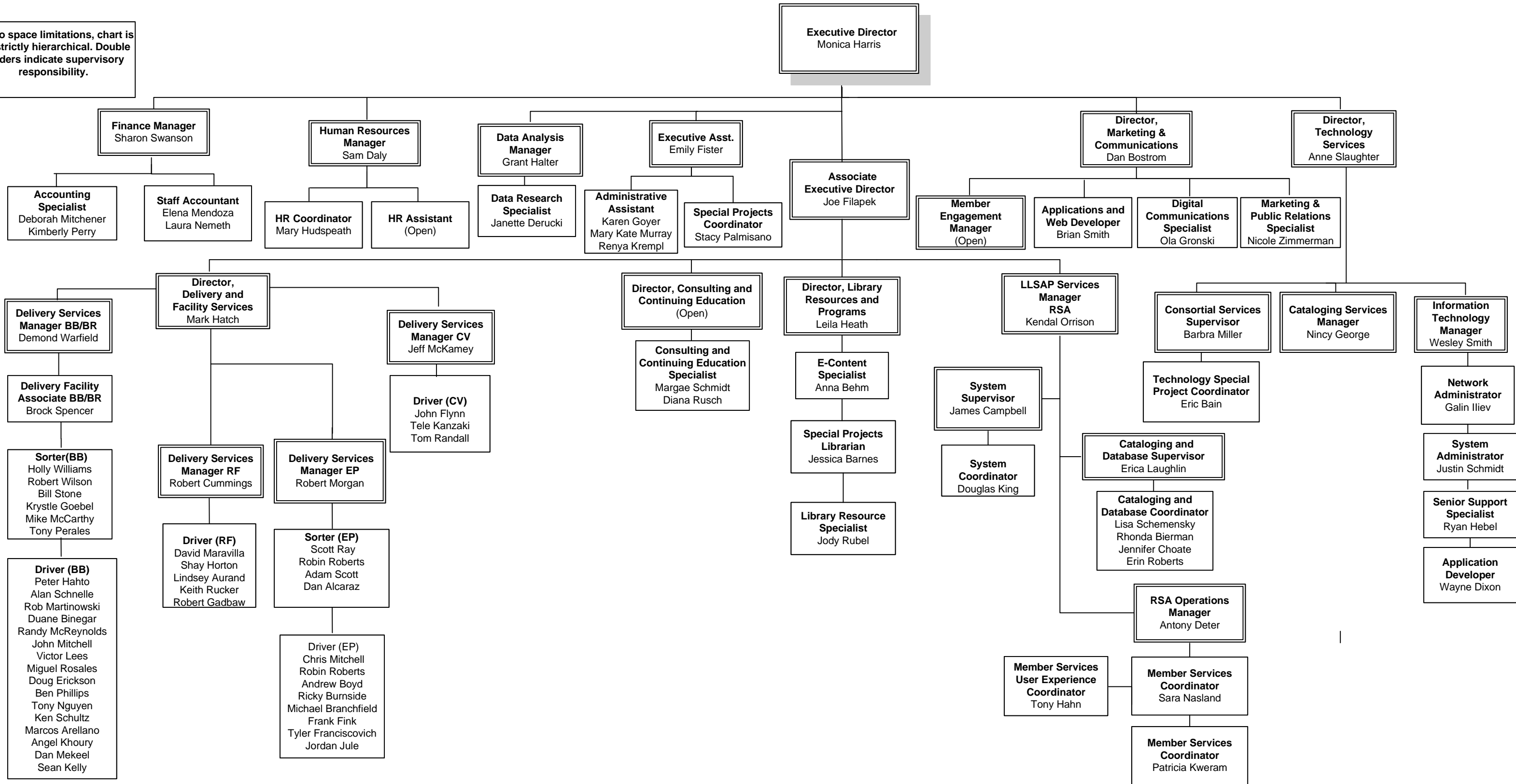
Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read the job description and requirements for the Executive Director position and confirm that I can perform these core job functions.

Signature

Date

Due to space limitations, chart is not strictly hierarchical. Double borders indicate supervisory responsibility.



Document Information and Revision Control

Date of Completion for Information and Contact Inventory: date xxxxx

Name of Person Completing Document: name , title

The Emergency Succession Plan and the supporting documents (the information and contact inventory, job descriptions, and organizational charts) should be reviewed and updated annually.

Signatures of Approval for RAILS

Board President: _____ Date: _____

Executive Director: _____ Date: _____

Acting Executive Director: _____ Date: _____

Acting Executive Director's Current Title: Associate Executive Director

Other Staff: _____ Date: _____

Other Staff: _____ Date: _____

Other Staff: _____ Date: _____