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Are You Preparing for Your Next Job?

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Are You Preparing for Your Next Job?

LAMA Education Committee

http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/fac/diller/lama/jobpreparation.htm

ALA Annual Conference, Chicago, IL June 25, 2005

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Background

LAMA Education Co. work prior to 2004:

- Managerial Competencies
- Attempts at New Supervisors Focus Group

During fall 2004:

- LAMA Committee members with graduate student conducted interviews of 39 new supervisors.

Goals of the Study

Learn about the experiences of new supervisors:

- What competencies are essential?
- Knowledge, skills and behaviors essential to success
- Which aspects were included in their professional education programs

Interview Instrument

Developed by Jennifer Arns and Carol Price,
University of South Carolina, SLIS

Designed to gather:

- Background information
- Top critical issues
- Managerial competencies crucial to success
- Role of Professional MLS training

Interview Instrument

Also gathered:

- Future Plans for Professional Development
- ALA‘s role in helping new supervisors
- Helpful aspects formal MLS coursework
- Suggested improvements to MLS coursework

New Supervisors

- 39 interviewed
- Graduates of MLS programs
- In current supervisory positions for less than 5 years
- Academic and public libraries
- Supervising professionals or non-professionals.

New Supervisors

- Variety of titles, “library director” or “executive director” predominate

In their jobs:

- 25% in job less than 1 year
- 25% for fewer than 10 years
- 50% were supervisors for more than 2 years but less than 6 years

New Supervisors

They Supervise:

- 33% had up to 3 direct reports
- 46% had 4 – 10 people
- 18% had over 10 people

New Supervisor's Jobs

- *"Encourage and empower. Develop personnel skills and abilities, make sure things get done."*

- *"Make sure employees know what they are doing, schedule, deal with any interpersonal relationships or issues that come up, hire, fire, HR issues and training"*

Critical Issues

- Supervising with no formal training other than on-the-job; Responsibility without Authority
- Time Management
- Personnel issues
- Training and Staff Development

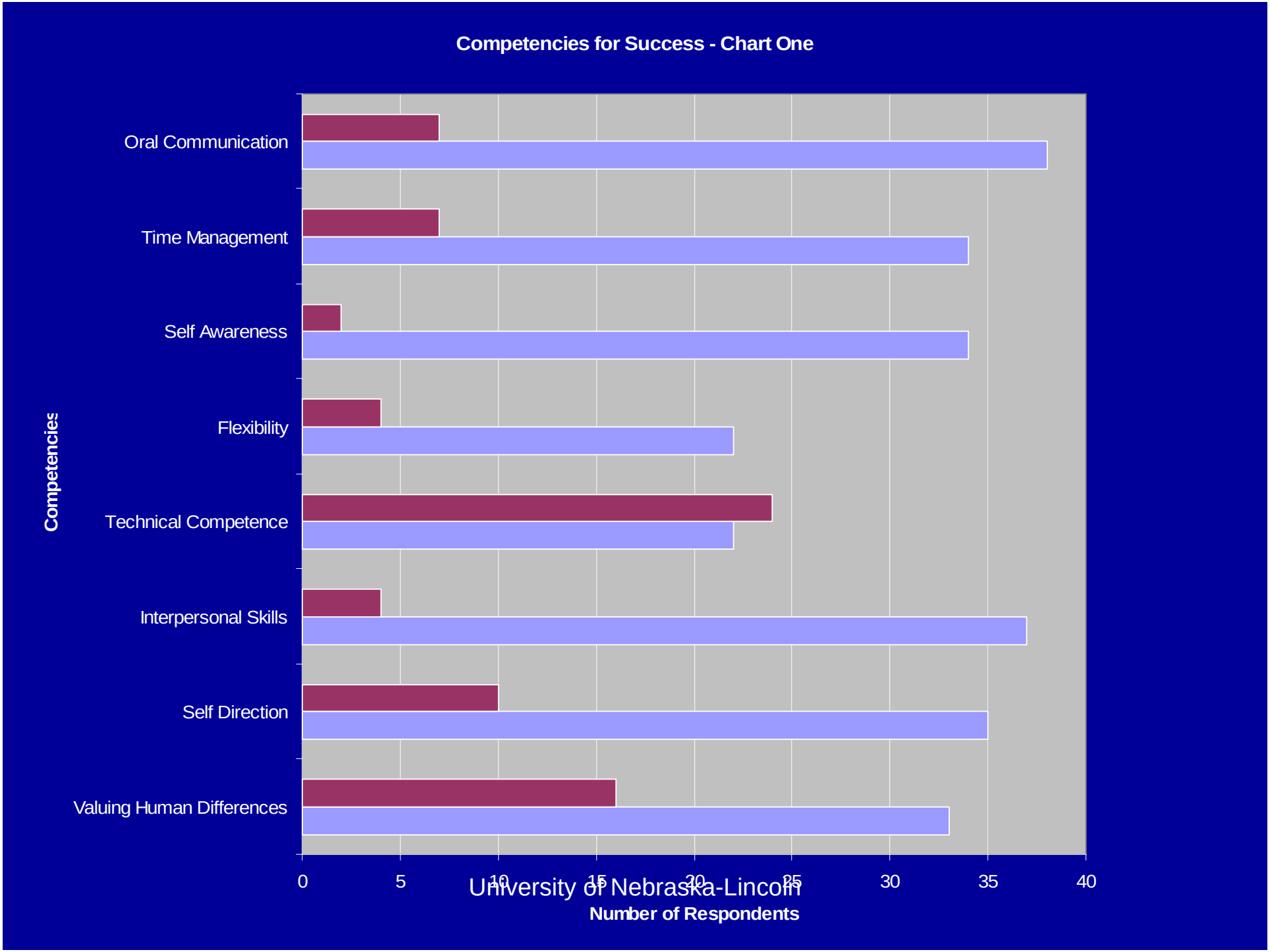
Critical Issues

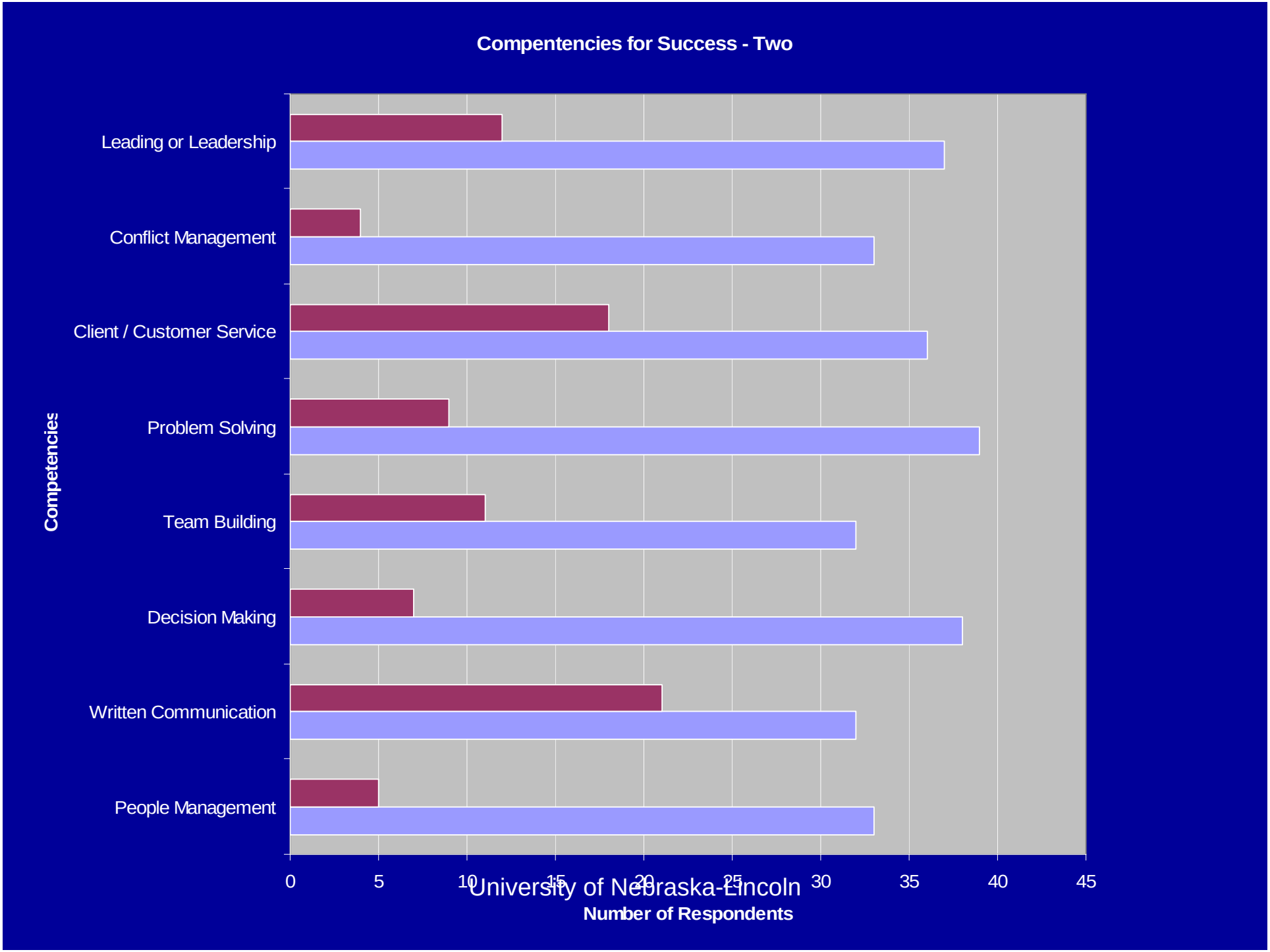
- "*Political Issues – Responding to the community, public, special interest groups, churches, city council, city clerk, etc. Accountable to multiple groups with different priorities and concerns*"

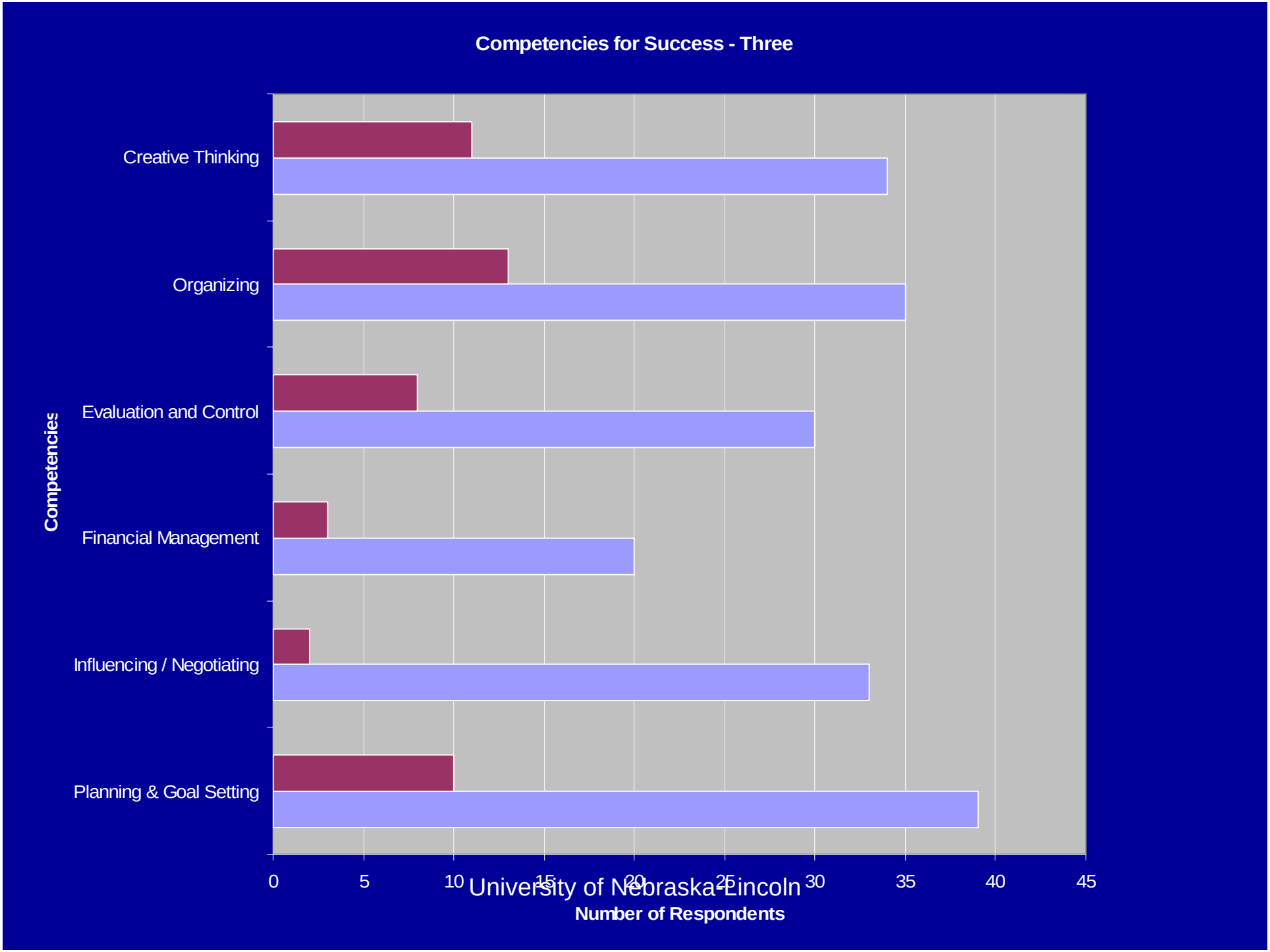
- *"Being promoted from within and going from peer to supervisor"*

Critical Issues

- *“Time Management – story time, school visits, children’s programs and running the library”*
- *“Learning the politics at the management level”*


Competencies for Success - Chart One
Oral Communication
Time Management
Self Awareness
Flexibility
Technical Competence
Interpersonal Skills
Self Direction
Valuing Human Differences
Competencies
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Number of Respondents


Compentencies for Success - Two
Leading or Leadership
Conflict Management
Client / Customer Service
Problem Solving
Team Building
Decision Making
Written Communication
People Management
Competencies
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Number of Respondents

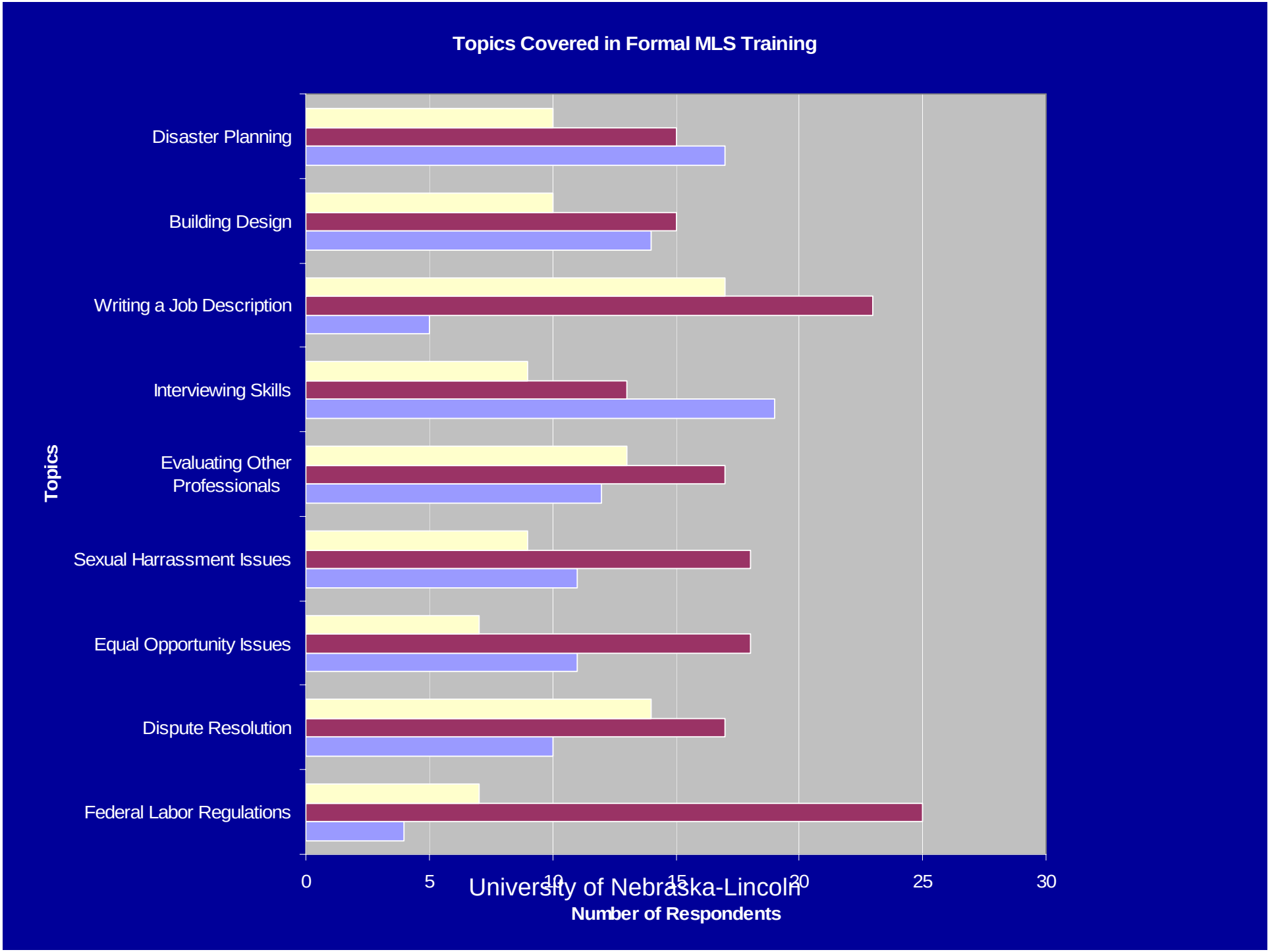

Competencies for Success - Three
Creative Thinking
Organizing
Evaluation and Control
Financial Management
Influencing / Negotiating
Planning & Goal Setting
Competencies
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Number of Respondents

Valuable Training & Experience

- In-Service & Technical Training by county library systems
- Leadership institutes
- Previous work experience
- ALA mentoring programs
- State Library Associations

Valuable Training and Experiences

- Networking
- Good Role Models
- Reading Professional Literature
- PLA programs
- Volunteering in the Community
- Conferences and Professional Meetings


Topics Covered in Formal MLS Training
Disaster Planning
Building Design
Writing a Job Description
Interviewing Skills
Evaluating Other Professionals
Sexual Harrassment Issues
Equal Opportunity Issues
Dispute Resolution
Federal Labor Regulations
Topics
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Number of Respondents

Most Useful MLS Coursework

- Group Work
- Information on collection development and budgeting for the collection
- Presentation Skills
- Group projects based on real life scenarios

Supervisors' Future Plans

- Seek out training opportunities
- Attend professional conferences
- ALA and state library association training
- Networking and mentoring programs
- Take classes; work toward PhD or MS
- Small percentage unsure whether they'll stay in management.

What ALA Can Do

- *"Provide networking opportunities – someone to call on and talk to, to combat the isolation many small library supervisors face."*
- *"There is a strong need for mentoring and this is particularly important for smaller academic environments and community colleges."*

What ALA Can Do

- *"The most valuable experiences are regional experiences. I would like to see regional institutes that are more affordable."*

- *"More frequent and less expensive programs on leadership, financial management, influencing and negotiating."*

MLS Coursework Recommendations

- *“I don’t think I’m using what I learned in my MLS courses in my work as a supervisor. I think they should have a course on management.”*
- *“My master’s program did not do much to help me be a supervisor. I think everyone should be required to do an internship… We need to apply all the theory to practical applications.”*

MLS Coursework Recommendations

- "*Everything I learned I've used. However, focus of coursework is too theoretical. Need more practical personnel training.*"

- *"Oddly, the most useful aspect of my MLS program is not library specific. In every course I took, students were required to do an oral presentation. I'm no longer afraid of public speaking; this is invaluable when I am called upon to speak to groups on behalf of the library."*

Discussion

MLS programs:

- Doing well at technical training
- Perception is we’re not doing so well in other areas.

- Can we?
- Should we?
- And If so how?

Discussion – Can We?

- Some competencies - personal traits?
- Acquire through personal value systems, life experiences and social maturity.

- MLS Programs can:
  - Build Awareness of Importance of these traits
  - Provide learning experiences, opportunities for self-awareness

Discussion – Can We?

- Competence with some skills require substantial study and practice.
- MLS programs could channel interested students to courses offered in other programs

Discussion – Can We?

- Some skills could be incorporated into MLS coursework.
- Additional modules will require additional classroom time
- Students would need theoretical background as a basis in which to ground the skills

Discussion – Should We?

- Are the traditional assumptions of students still valid?
- What are MLS student needs?
- Should we back away from focus on technical skills?

Discussion – Should We?

- Is there room for electives in MLS curriculum to cover these needs?
- Can we developed customized programs?
- Is there institutional support for changes?
- Do we have the faculty expertise to teach these electives?

Let’s hear from our speakers