# REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR LIBRARY BY INCORPORATING STUDENT ASSISTANTS INTO YOUR TEAMS

Sue Erickson, Sherry Matis and Kat Williams
Virginia Wesleyan University
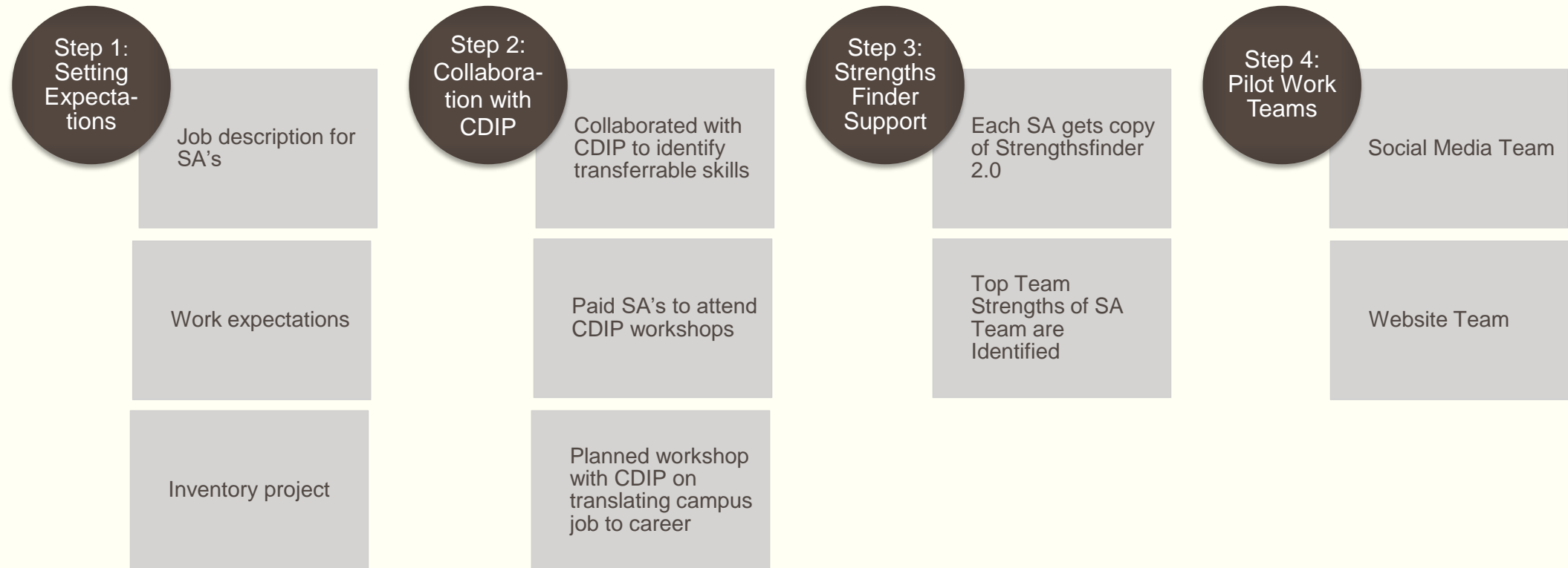
# Shrinking Budgets; Expanding Opportunities

- A lean staff and no hope of additional positions

- Additional work hours for Federal Work Study students

- Added emphasis on career development as part of VWU's Quality Enhancement Plan

- Several library staff started as student workers in our own college libraries

- Shift in language from "work-study" to "student assistants"

- Plenty of lower level work that needs to be done and little staff time

- New services we want/need to provide

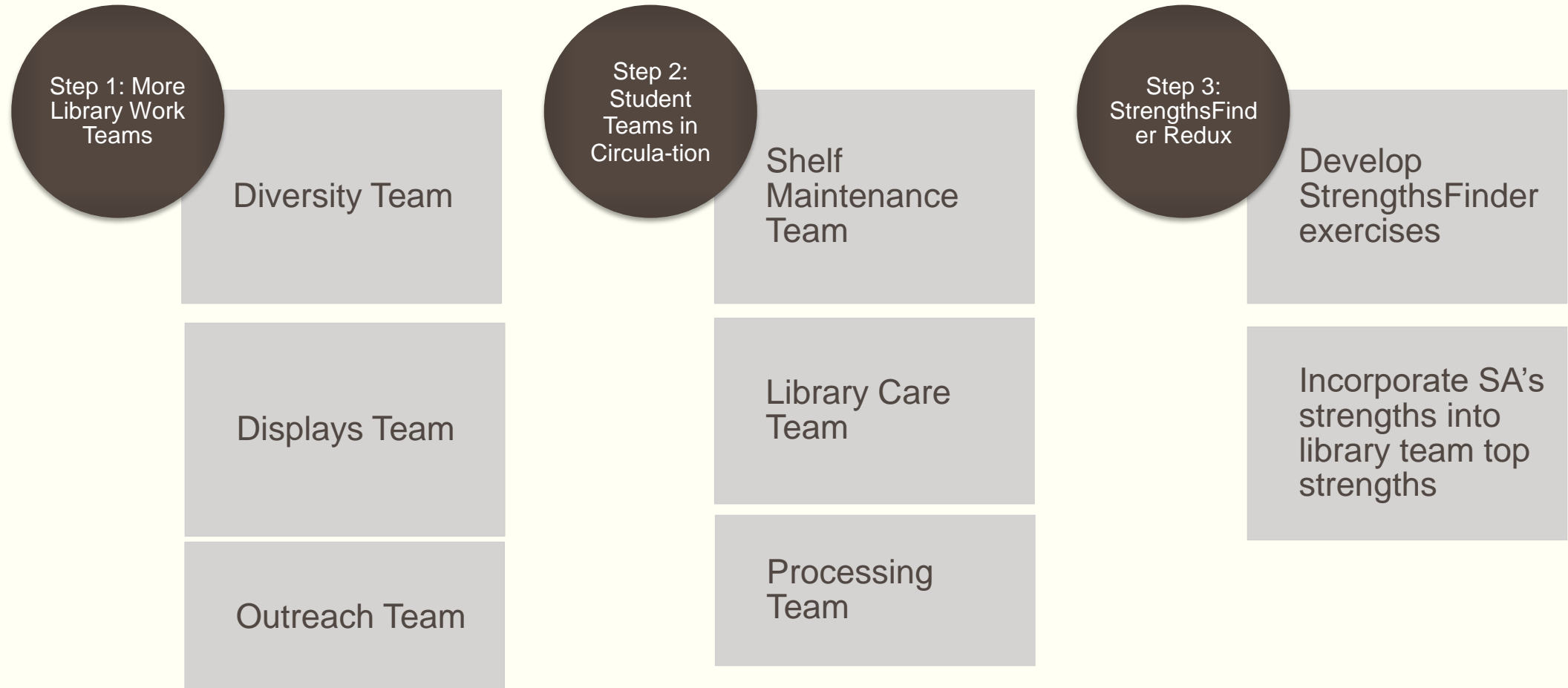- New team structure within the library

# Phase 1: Setting Expectations & Support for SA's

**Step 1: Setting Expectations**

Job description for SA's

Work expectations

Inventory project

**Step 2: Collaboration with CDIP**

Collaborated with CDIP to identify transferrable skills

Paid SA's to attend CDIP workshops

Planned workshop with CDIP on translating campus job to career

**Step 3: Strengths Finder Support**

Each SA gets copy of Strengthsfinder 2.0

Top Team Strengths of SA Team are Identified

**Step 4: Pilot Work Teams**

Social Media Team

Website Team

# Phase 2: Incorporate More SA's into Staff Teams; New SA Teams

**Step 1: More Library Work Teams**

Diversity Team

Displays Team

Outreach Team

**Step 2: Student Teams in Circula-tion**

Shelf Maintenance Team

Library Care Team

Processing Team

**Step 3: StrengthsFinder Redux**

Develop StrengthsFinder exercises

Incorporate SA's strengths into library team top strengths
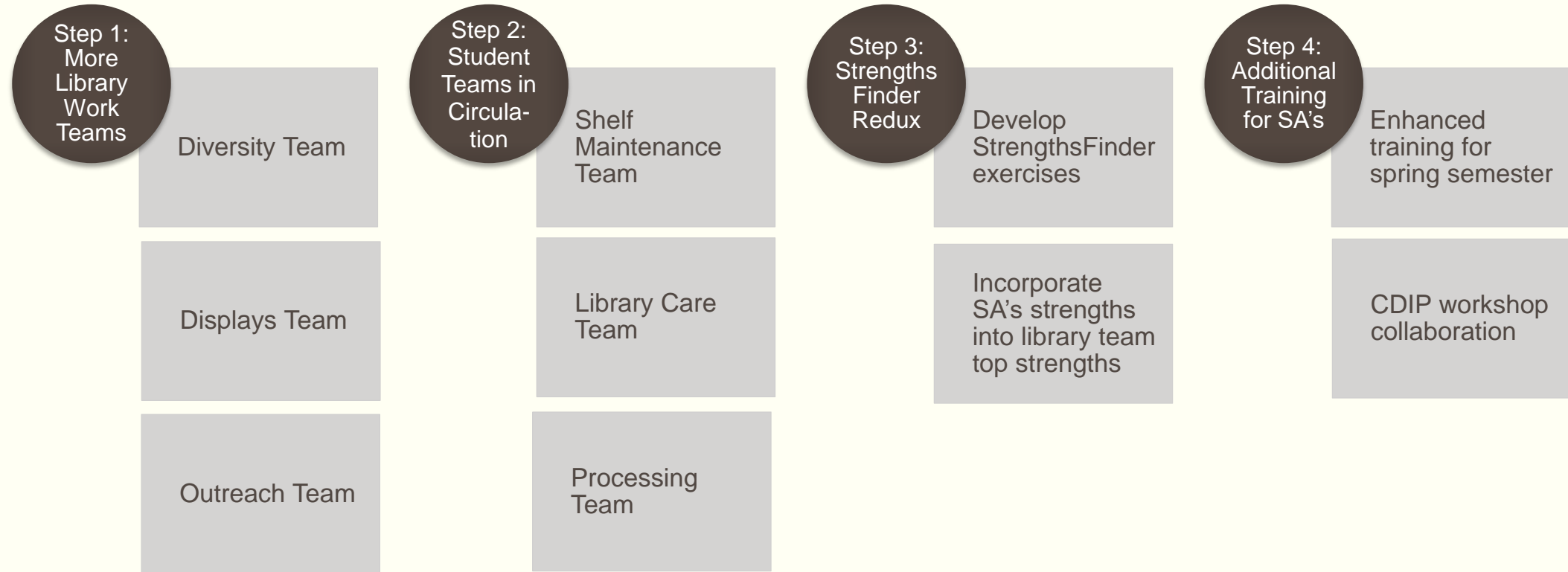
# Outcomes: Expected & Unexpected

- New sense of teamwork among the SA's (ex. app for finding swaps)

- Mild resentment about new expectations

- Students don't like change any more than staff do

- Confidence-building for SA's

- Increase in suggestions from SA's for service improvements

- Some attitude improvement for less engaged SA's

# Phase 3: New Circulation Supervisor; New SA Teams

**Step 1: More Library Work Teams**

Diversity Team

Displays Team

Outreach Team

**Step 2: Student Teams in Circula-tion**

Shelf Maintenance Team

Library Care Team

Processing Team

**Step 3: Strengths Finder Redux**

Develop StrengthsFinder exercises

Incorporate SA's strengths into library team top strengths

**Step 4: Additional Training for SA's**

Enhanced training for spring semester

CDIP workshop collaboration

# Student Teams and Students on Teams

- Display Team – highly successful; motivated and guided

- Social Media Team – great ideas when they contributed; challenges in getting consistency, scheduling meetings and communication


- General challenges
  - Balancing between raised expectations with no pay increase
  - Communicating with SAs, especially for non-supervisors overseeing projects
  - Motivating SAs

# July 2018 - New Challenges & Opportunities

- Elimination of Circulation Supervisor position

- Elimination of position in CDIP

- Scaled back the number of library teams

- Discussion about incorporating SA input in a more impromptu way rather than assigning SAs to teams

- Initiated discussion with Financial Aid about a new pay rate structure for SAs

# Audience Activity: Discussion in Groups of 3

- Discuss the following over the next 10 minutes:

- Share an example of involving student assistants that was a success or failure. What made it so?

- Have you tried having student assistants work in teams? How has that worked for your library?

- What team building or staff development have you done with your student staff?

- How do you communicate with student assistants? (Meetings? Memos? What else?)

# What's Next?

- Revisit Strengthsfinder 2.0

- SA appreciation

- Peer coaching

- Leadership skill development

- Fun!

- Follow-up – where do our SA's end up?

# Questions?

Sue Erickson, serickson@vwu.edu

Sherry Matis, smatis@vwu.edu

Kat Williams, williamskathryn333@gmail.com