



A Typology of Librarian Status at Land Grant Universities

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Data were gathered on librarian status at fifty land grant universities. The findings reveal four status types: Professorial, Other ranks with tenure, Other ranks without tenure, and Academic or Professional Staff. Eighty percent of institutions have librarians who are faculty and 85 percent of those are tenure-track.

INTRODUCTION

Librarians at colleges and universities have sought a role and recognition that is based on their expertise and qualifications and on their participation in the teaching and research missions of the institution. Academic librarians frequently have faculty status. The nature and desirability of faculty status is still a question for debate in some circles, for reasons that include the idea that librarianship is a profession that needs no validation from the outside; the belief that the work of librarians is not the same and not even similar to that of teaching faculty; and the notion that faculty obligations such as research and publication are unreasonable and onerous for librarians.

Although faculty status for academic librarians is long-standing and widespread, its implementation is not uniform. While appointment, assignment, and workload for teaching faculty at similar kinds of institutions fall into predictable patterns, the environment for librarians is not so uniform. A candidate for a faculty vacancy in an academic library cannot assume that "faculty" implies rank, tenure, participation in governance, a publication requirement, and so on. It might have any, all, or none of these things and still be a "faculty" position. Conversely, it might have all of them in some form, and be a staff position.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is a description and categorization of librarian status at American land grant universities using data gathered from the institutional Web sites of the 1862 land grant institution in each state. Land grant universities share a number of fundamental characteristics: they are state universities (with the exception of Cornell University, the only private land grant) that share the tripartite land grant mission: teaching, research, and service. At the same time, they have geographic and cultural diversity, representing each of the fifty states in the US. Moreover, they vary widely in size. Choosing one institution in each state creates a manageable number and a coherent group of institutions.

University Web sites are the source of data on the status of librarians, including rank system, tenure status, and representation in faculty governance. The data are used to create a typology of librarian status at land grant universities ($n=50$). This approach is an attempt to look beyond binary categorizations (faculty/staff) by examining particular characteristics of the implementation of models of status. It attempts to move beyond the atomization of describing characteristics in isolation from each other, e.g., looking at tenure, representation in

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governance, etc., without considering how those characteristics relate to each other or co-occur.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on faculty status, academic librarians, and administrative and organizational aspects of academic libraries is voluminous. This review concentrates on the historical context of faculty status for librarians, surveys of librarian status, and arguments for and against faculty status, but it is not a comprehensive review of the literature in any of those areas.

Academic librarians have always had a close relationship with teaching faculty and their programs of research and instruction, and there have been discussions of librarian role and status throughout the profession's history, for example, Frank A. Lundy,¹ Lawrence S. Thompson,² and Arthur M. McAnally.³ Discussions such as those, and others from the early and mid-1960s, including J. Forgotson,⁴ J. F. Harvey,⁵ David C. Weber,⁶ Faye M. Blake,⁷ and Robert B. Downs,⁸ explore the issues of librarians' education, responsibilities, and professional identities. This discussion came to a head in the late 1960s, when significant social changes and their effect on higher education gave academic librarians the impetus to push harder for more recognition and respect, as discussed by Judith A. Segal.⁹ R. Dean Galloway¹⁰ looks at progress ten years after "the rebellion that broke out at the Atlantic City [American Library Association (ALA)] conference in 1969," which "fundamentally changed the American Library Association and academic librarianship as well." The rebellion included the demand for faculty status for librarians, and ALA and its academic division, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) gave their support at that conference, resulting in the publication of the "Joint Statement"¹¹ (with the American Association of University Professors [AAUP] and the Association of American Colleges [AAC]) on faculty status that first appeared in 1971. Galloway estimates that "75 percent of ... academic libraries had faculty status in 1976 compared with 51 percent in 1966," but he remarks on "the difficulties of making comparisons of this type" due to "the subtleties of the definitions and descriptions of faculty status."¹² He also notes that from 1969 to 1979, academic librarians became better educated and more qualified, and that the increase in research and publication activity caused the number of professional journals in the field to mushroom. In the early 1970s, ACRL issued a series of statements and guidelines, aimed at standardizing and codifying what was meant by faculty status.¹³⁻¹⁵ These documents include model appointment, promotion, and tenure criteria, as well as the "ACRL Standards for Faculty Status for College and University Librarians,"¹⁶ which describes nine standards to be met, including peer review for promotion, eligibility for tenure, access to sabbatical leaves and research funds, representation in governance, and so on.

One argument against faculty status asserts that librarians are not prepared to take on the scholarly responsibilities that are part of a faculty role, both because they are not prepared by their education, and because their other responsibilities are too demanding to allow it. Authors taking this position include Richard M. Dougherty,¹⁷ H. William Axford,¹⁸ Rachel Applegate,¹⁹ Herbert S. White,²⁰ and Blaise Cronin,²¹ among many others. Mary Biggs²² advises abandoning the quest for faculty status and demanding recognition for the unique skills of the profession. Counterarguments include evidence of librarians' eagerness to embrace scholarly responsibilities, such as R. Dean Galloway²³ and E. J. Josey,²⁴ the assertion that academic librarians have no choice but to be part of scholarly

culture and activity, e.g., Beverly Toy²⁵ and Eli M. Oboler,²⁶ and, more recently, the idea that librarians, like faculty in other fields, can make the best scholarly contribution by being true to the particular values, practices, and expertise of their field, including Janet Swan Hill.^{27,28}

Martin Joachim²⁹ looks at the origins of the issue and its development up until the time he was writing, nearly forty years ago. As academic libraries grew larger, there was a growing recognition of the professional and scholarly expertise of librarians. Arthur M. McAnally traces the roots of faculty status from twenty-five years previously. He describes how academic librarians "have tended more and more to apply to themselves the truly academic criteria which the classroom faculty apply to themselves."³⁰

Writing again a few years later, Arthur M. McAnally³¹ observes that the profession was held back from achieving faculty status in the early twentieth century by "housekeeping" (librarians engaging in menial tasks rather than assuming professional responsibility) and the low quality of library education. He lists a number of other factors, including the large numbers of librarians who are women, the autocratic nature of many library directors, the negative views of librarians held by "classroom faculty," the lack of support from ALA, and the sincere belief that librarians should stand apart ("on their own") from other groups. He traces "the path to the present," beginning with the post-war information explosion, which required increased expertise among librarians.

Janet Swan Hill has written persuasively of the need to "wear our own clothes,"³² as faculty. She describes the characteristics of librarianship and the need to communicate them to administrators and teaching faculty.³³ Hill amplifies these themes further, asserting that maintaining a faculty status system for librarians requires "constant vigilance" with regard to their status, because the story may need to be told to every new provost and various teaching colleagues.³⁴

Judith A. Segal³⁵ describes the efforts of the Library Association of the City Colleges of New York (LACCNY) to obtain faculty status. The group spent the years from 1939 to 1965 attempting to achieve their goal. Segal ascribes their failure to political and academic naiveté, and their eventual victory to the social and educational climate of the 1960s and a higher education political environment in which change was easier to achieve.

The literature of librarianship has many opinion pieces on the topic of faculty status, e.g., Dougherty,^{36,37} White,^{38,39} Catherine Murray-Rust,⁴⁰ Deborah A. Carver,⁴¹ and a number of studies that present and analyze the arguments for and against, including Mark Y. Herring and Michael Gorman,⁴² Fred Hill and Robert Hauptmann,⁴³ Janet Swan Hill,⁴⁴ Donald E. Riggs,⁴⁵ Louise S. Sherby,⁴⁶ Norman E. Tanis,⁴⁷ and Beth J. Shapiro.⁴⁸ Diane E. Ruess⁴⁹ argues for more choice in librarian appointments, while Philip J. Jones and James Stivers⁵⁰ find the separation between librarians and other library employees counter-productive.

Deborah O. Lee⁵¹ investigates the impact of tenure on librarians' starting salaries, finding that there is no particular benefit. Elizabeth C. Henry and Dana M. Caudle⁵² studied the effect of tenure on turnover in academic libraries. They found that tenure had little effect on turnover in the institutions surveyed. Pamela S. Bradigan and Carol A. Mularski⁵³ explore the evaluation of publications in the promotion and tenure process. John M. Budd⁵⁴ also considers publishing activity and analyzing patterns from academic libraries. Danielle Bodrero Hoggan⁵⁵ summarizes the sometimes-contradictory advantages and disadvantages of faculty status that have been demonstrated by research.

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