

Development of Faculty Status for Librarians at Indiana University

A Brief History of the Development of Faculty Status for Librarians

Prepared for the Committee on Academic Status
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The struggle of librarians to be recognized as full members of the academic community is not a new development. It has, in fact, been of major concern to librarians for about one hundred years.[1] In the past thirty years, however, there has been a concerted effort by librarians to attain some degree of faculty status. Because of what has come to be known as the "information explosion," university librarians today must be knowledgeable in certain subject areas and have an ability in a number of languages. For these reasons they feel now, more than ever, that they deserve recognition.

Universities, to be sure, have long been hesitant to grant such recognition. Many universities have long considered teaching librarians as worthy of faculty status or special rank, as an examination of annual catalogs or registers of United States universities and colleges for 1870-71 shows. Columbia College (later Columbia University) records the librarian, assistant librarian and School of Mines librarian as "Officers of Instruction and Government" Dartmouth College lists the librarian's name with the faculty but without rank. Indiana University at this time listed the librarian under "College Officers." Neither the University of Pennsylvania nor the University of Wisconsin, on the other hand, even mention the librarians in their catalogs. In a representative sample of catalogs and registers, furthermore, no university granted academic titles to librarians unless they also taught.[2]

Since only two college libraries in 1876, when the American Library Association was organized, contained over 50,000 volumes,[3] one can see that there was limited demands on librarians and their talents. An awareness of the services that librarians could render, however, was made explicit in an 1876 report by the United States Board of Education. In this report F. B. Perkins and William Mathews proposed that "professorships of books and reading" be created to guide students in the use of an increasing bibliographical output.[4]

By 1900 there had been some advances in the status of librarians. Among eighteen major universities checked, however, no librarian held an academic title per se. Indiana University, for example, used the heading "Library Officers" after the listing of faculty members. Some universities--Michigan and Princeton, for example--listed librarians with full professors, but without academic titles. And in other schools, such as Yale University, the librarian and assistant librarian were listed under "Faculty and Instructors." without titles, while the remainder of the library staff was included with "Other Officers" after the faculty listing.[5]

Although these samples show a trend in recognizing head librarians faculty members, it is, therefore, still clear that other professional librarians were far from faculty status at the turn of the century. There had, indeed, been an increase in the awareness of the librarians' services. In 1878, H. A. Sawtelle stated that college librarianship "ought not to be annexed to a professorship, but be itself a professorship." [6] And President D. C. Gilman of Johns Hopkins University stated, in 1891, that "the librarian's office should rank with that of professor... The profession of librarian should be distinctly recognized. Men and women should be encouraged to enter it, should be trained to discharge its duties, and should be rewarded, promoted, and honored in proportion to the services they render." [7]

Such statements make it clear that not only faculty members were becoming aware of the services of librarians, but also librarians themselves were desirous of recognition which they felt they deserved. The librarian of the University of Washington, for example, defended the training and scholarly nature of the work of college and university librarians at the 1911 conference of the American Librarian Association:

With such preparation and such relationship to the educational processes I shall claim that the library staff must rank with the faculty or teaching staff of any department. The librarian or head of the staff should have the rank and pay of a professor; the assist and librarian ... should be accorded the rank and pay of an associate professor; and the other members of the staff that of assistant professor or instructor, this to be determined by the nature of the work, the preparation and particular ability required; and those not fitted to so rank should not be members of the staff but some other name should be adopted. [8]

Within a few years of this 1911 conference, several important steps were taken. Columbia University, for example, ruled in 1911 that "the librarian shall have the rank of professor, the assistant librarian that of associate professor and the supervisors shall rank as assistant professors and bibliographers as instructors." Librarians and assistant librarians at Harvard University became eligible to participate in the faculty retirement system. [9]

In 1927 George A. Works published the first complete study of the status of professional librarians, *College and University Library Problems*. Works made several conclusions on the basis of his review of types of library work, factors affecting the status of a library staff, and various conditions and benefits:

1. Insufficient distinction is made in libraries between clerical and professional types of service, but there are a number of positions in every large library whose requirements in professional education and experience are comparable with the requirements for positions in the various grades in the teaching staff.
2. Among the seventeen institutions studied, wide differences were found, varying from those in which the library staff, except the librarian and perhaps one or two others, were classified as clerical.
3. In some universities, e.g., Columbia and Stanford, librarians were given equivalent status, but not considered members of the instructional staff.
4. Except for the head librarian, salaries of the library staff were generally lower than those of comparable members of the faculty.

5. The academic preparation of faculty members of all professional ranks was more advanced than that of library department heads.
6. No account was taken of the fact that annual periods of service were ordinarily longer for members of the library staff than for the teaching staff.
7. Retirement provisions varied: seven institutions had no allowance for faculty or librarians; six had the same retirement for both groups, and three had different arrangements for faculty and librarians.[10]

During the past thirty years, Downs points out,[11] there has been a great increase in literature relating to status of college and university librarians. The first of a number of comprehensive surveys after Works was that of Miriam C. Maloy. Mrs. Maloy investigated 129 institutions and found that 98 granted faculty status to chief librarians; thirty assistant and associate librarians had faculty status; in twenty-seven libraries department heads had faculty status; and professional assistants had faculty status in twenty libraries.[12]

The literature on the subject of academic status still continues and shows that gains have been made in a number of universities. In September, 1959, for example, the University Libraries Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries pointed out that

over half of the colleges and universities in the country have already recognized the propriety and value of academic status for their professional library staffs by granting academic recognition as professional librarians. Sometimes full faculty status is granted, with academic rank and titles; in other instances librarians are recognized formally as members of the academic family with equivalent and corresponding ranks. Whether academic or full faculty status shall be granted is a matter of individual determination by each institution. However, the essential educational nature of the librarian's duties has been recognized increasingly by administrators, faculties, professional societies, and accrediting agencies. For example, the society of college faculty members, the American Association of University Professors, states that "librarians of professional status are engaged in teaching and research," and are eligible for membership provided their own institution consents. Some accrediting agencies have stipulated faculty rank for professional library staff.[13]

The Library Association of the City University of New York listed, in April, 1965, 136 publicly supported colleges and universities which grant professional librarians titles of faculty rank; this number does not include junior, two-year, or community colleges and does not include those, institutions which give faculty titles only to librarians who teach or who hold administrative positions.[14]

In a survey released in January, 1966, Wayne State University libraries noted that

librarians are considered to be members of the academic staff in over eighty per cent of the major universities., but library staffs in toto have professorial rank in slightly less than twenty percent of these institutions. An additional thirty per cent grant professorial rank to certain categories of librarians, usually to library administrators. Factors most

frequently cited as the basis for professorial rank were administrative responsibility, degrees held, and professional competence.

In addition to the thirty-two libraries which indicated that they granted professorial titles to all or part of the library staff, fifteen additional libraries reported having library classifications that were related to or the equivalent of faculty ranks. The majority of these libraries (9/15) had four-level classifications such as Librarian I., II, III, IV with these four levels equating to the four professorial ranks.

Eligibility for membership on the faculty legislative or advisory councils and prerequisites such as tenure and sabbatical leave seem to be significant indicators of status in a university. Only nine libraries reported that all librarians were eligible for membership on the faculty council or senate. About one-third (20) of the libraries limited such membership to the chief librarian, and slightly more than one-third (24) indicated that membership was limited to certain ranks or classes of librarians. In some cases such limitations followed the general university policy of such membership being limited to the faculty of a given rank or to tenure faculty.[15]

Librarians, one can see, have come a long way in the past one hundred years in their quest for faculty status. "The struggle by academic librarians for improved standing obviously continues, but with increasing prospects for general acceptance.[16]

FOOTNOTES

1. Robert B. Downs, "Status of Academic Librarians in Retrospect," *College and Research Libraries*, XXIX,(July, 1968), 253.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p 254.
4. U.S. Board of Education, *Public Libraries in the United States of America: their History, Condition and Management: Special Report* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1876) 230 f.
5. Downs, p. 254 f.
6. H. A. Sawtelle, "The College Librarianship," *Library Journal* 1878), 162.
7. D. C. Gilman, "University Libraries, an Address at the Opening of the Sage Library of Cornell University, October 7, 1891," *University Problems in the United States*, 1898, p. 255
8. W. E. Henry, "The Academic Standing of College Library Assistants and their Relation to the Carnegie Foundation," *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, V (May, 1911), 259.
9. Downs, p. 256.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 257.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
12. Miriam C. Maloy, "Faculty Status of College Librarians," *ALA Bulletin*, XXXIII(April, 1939), 232-33, 302.
13. "Status of College and University Librarians," *College and Research Librarians* (September, 1959), 399.

14. Library Association of the City University of New York, unpublished report, 1965.
15. Wayne State University Libraries "Survey of the Status of Academic Librarians," unpublished report (January, 1966), 1.
16. Downs, p. 258.