

Authority. Dr. Kuhlman proposes this expedient for the North Texas group.

He might have proposed consolidation of the graduate schools, but to do so would have been impolitic under the circumstances. Instead, he advocates uniting the libraries under a central administration for an experimental period of three years. He specifies only vaguely the powers and duties of his *ad hoc* library authority, which is to consist of a representative council (already formed) and a director of libraries. Outwardly, his plan resembles the Oregon and Georgia college library combinations, but he substitutes for a council of librarians one of deans, trustees, and presidents. They can, if they will, go much further than librarians. The director would supervise the cooperative devices of the program and advise the council on other measures. He would not govern the member libraries, but Dr. Kuhlman hints that he might in time replace their head librarians.

Dr. Kuhlman points out the direction, without specifying the exact route and the rate of advance, leaving these tasks to the council and the director. Will the new vehicle move, without being fueled by a foundation grant? A great deal depends upon the leadership of

the council and the tact of the director, if one is appointed. If not in North Texas, such a plan may be adopted elsewhere, perhaps in circumstances permitting the director to assume authority over the internal administration of the member libraries. In regions where library use has greater variety, the professional, civic, and trade associations might be represented on the council, thereby giving the clientele of public and special libraries a voice in the planning of library resources. Central purchasing and cataloging of books might develop in some centers.

Dr. Kuhlman has invented a mechanism with great possibilities, particularly in the West and South which need a workable plan for combining libraries. While not new in a single detail, his invention offers a novel and, let us hope, practicable answer to the dilemma of library needs versus library fealty. Its worst flaw on paper—a want of detail, of specifications—will probably become its greatest virtue in practice. The details will be filled in by people aware of local limitations and potentialities. When a model has been set up and tried out, it will probably be widely copied.—*John Van Male, librarian, Madison College, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Manual for Trustees

Manual for Trustees of Colleges and Universities. Raymond Hughes. Iowa State College Press, 1943. IX, 166p.

To the librarian, as to the faculty at large, the college or university trustees are a group apart—certain gentlemen of prominence who appear at convocation or other great occasions. They, according to tradition, are the ones who blue-pencil budget requests; again, and according to the same source, they do not approve of innovations, either academic or political. As a matter of fact, librarians probably know as little about trustees as the latter know about librarians.

Trustees become trustees from a variety of sources and are chosen for a variety of reasons. They invariably come to their positions with a record of successful accomplishment in their own fields and with undoubted abilities which should be turned to the lasting profit of the institution. Many of them, however, come with little knowledge of academic procedure save what they may recollect

from their undergraduate days. The duties and powers of a trustee grew in a process somewhat akin to the development of the common law, restricted by tradition and extended by the initiative and interest of the individual trustee. Generally they have done their job well. There have been isolated cases in which boards of trustees might have been charged with neglect of duty if nothing more. At the other extreme might be placed the board of which it is said that it meets every Thursday as regularly as Rotary, stifling the college by too much government.

Primarily the duty of the trustees is to operate the college, since they, as a body corporate, actually own the institution, or, in the case of a public institution, act, as it were, with a power of attorney from the citizens. General tradition and custom indicate that this is best accomplished by the delegation of power to one or more officers, depending upon the size and complexity of the college. One would expect that the degree

of delegation would depend first upon the amount of confidence the trustees were willing to place in these officers and, second, upon whether the trustees were willing to admit that education is the business of experts in that field rather than of experts in business, banking, or law. Really it is simply a question as to how much detail should be referred to the trustees. Should these busy people who give their time to the college be required to pass on the suitability—academic, personal, or political—of individual faculty appointments? Rather, it would be expected that they would simply direct the president to secure the best faculty possible with such and such a salary scale. Usually this attitude holds where the president is concerned, for he is naturally regarded as having expert knowledge. But when it comes to the professor and his new laboratory building, or the librarian and his library, too often the specific expert knowledge is ignored for the broader view of the architect. All librarians can cite instances of buildings erected without reference to their functionalism within the college.

President Hughes approaches the duties of the board from experience on both sides of the fence. As teacher, dean, president, and trustee he has had the opportunity to observe institutional operation from a variety of angles, and it would seem that he has retained all of these viewpoints in his memory for use at this time. The result is a considered and objective judgment which will benefit most experienced and all neophyte trustees.

Librarians are usually willing to leave to others the discussion of the management of college finances, athletics, teaching loads, fraternities, and compulsory chapel. At the same time few other professions are as willing listeners to criticism of themselves—and frequently, condescending criticism—as are librarians. Perhaps through lack of expressed opinion on the affairs of the rest of the campus we have gained a reputation as a cloistered group, and because of our willingness to listen to criticism there may have grown up a supposition that any competent professor could run the library as well as the librarian does. We are on safest ground, however, if we discuss our own field of activity and allow the other parts of the college to speak for themselves.

Except for the general discussion of the faculty, President Hughes devotes practically as much space to the library as he does to any other phase of the college. No one of our profession is likely to quarrel with his division of emphasis. Indeed, it seems to be much more proper than is usual in discussions of college administration. The details of library administration and the emphasis given to each of the selected details are the interesting points for consideration. The subheading "The library must be in charge of a competent librarian," might be twisted to imply that the other departments did not require competence, if the librarian were not referred to four or five times with the qualification ". . . if fully competent."

One would not wish to be petty in discussing a book as generally excellent and useful as this manual. Would it not seem, however, that the trustees should be furnished a more effective and broader approach to the problem of an adequate library than to be told to consider whether the time required to secure a book at the delivery desk is more than two minutes—except perhaps where it may be with a view to inducing the trustees to allow the librarian to design a new library building? Trustees have little enough time to devote to the college library, and that time ordinarily could be better spent than in worrying about such points as this, and about reserved books, duplicate copies, microfilms, and interlibrary loans. These are administrative matters which should be considered by no higher authority than the faculty committee on the library.

To most trustees the library is a definite entity, something in which they can interest themselves much more easily than in the teaching departments. Could not their interest, therefore, be directed towards subject matters appropriate for their consideration? The budget of the library should be their first concern, as President Hughes would agree. Their consideration of the budget should embrace not only the number of dollars but the type of budget and the authority of various officers, such as the librarian, the dean, the comptroller, and the faculty committee, over that budget. It should be in relation to the future as well as to the past program of the college. The desirable or necessary size of the library and the fields of

knowledge to be covered cannot be determined by anyone but the trustees, since the decision rests on the determination of a long-term fiscal and educational policy. It is the same problem on the trustee level as the question of the value and duties of the faculty committee on the library. The ideal is a strong committee and a strong librarian, both broad enough in their interests to work objectively. If there is a weak committee it becomes a rubber stamp; if there is a weak librarian the committee tends to usurp the administration of the library. By their position the trustees are too strong for the librarian to oppose

them, and they should be warned away from purely administrative matters to fields where their peculiar knowledge and abilities will be most useful.

It is unfair to judge this much-needed manual by the chapter which most interests the library profession. If librarians are not too closely locked in their ivory towers they will realize that the general problems of the campus have been handled in it most adequately, even though librarianship may have been regarded somewhat casually.—*Helmer L. Webb, librarian, Union College, Schenectady, N.Y.*

Letters in Public Relations

How to Use Letters in College Public Relations; A Survey of Principles and Source Book of Effective Examples. William H. Butterfield. Harper and Brothers, 1944. 182p.

The subject of public relations is frequently thought of as something a bit esoteric, a semi-mysterious method by which a reputation can be created where none existed before or a poor reputation made over into a good one. Operating upon such a notion and pursuing such an objective, an institution sometimes will hire a public relations expert at a high salary and hopefully await a miracle of accomplishment.

It is true, of course, that public relations experts are frequently worth their money. But it is equally true that in the long run the public reputation of an institution can rise no higher than its source, that no amount of "experting" can substitute for administrative officials who are alive to opportunities for improving the public impression which they themselves are constantly making whether they consciously will it or not. Such officials can profit from the advice of an expert, but much of the final result will be wasted unless they learn how to make the most of their own efforts.

As institutions, colleges and universities can be especially deceptive to their own agents. To presidents and other administrative officials, they may seem—with their curricula and the paraphernalia of grades and records and degrees—wholly formalized. Left to its natural tendencies, it should be noted, ad-

ministration can become a creeping paralysis which minutely classifies and eventually ossifies official operations and turns all communication into stereotypes. Yet the human and personal contacts of a college or university are remarkably many and diverse, and the opportunity to use them wisely occurs frequently. Most parents, in the fondness of their parenthood, approach the college of their own or their child's choice in a misty-eyed manner which is much closer to that of a love affair than of the purchase of a specific commodity, education. Most students, at least in the beginning, look upon college as an exciting adventure. And alumni, as we have been reminded, often see their alma mater in the light of the "four happiest years of my life." The college or university which does not recognize this situation as vital for its public relations is missing its opportunity and part of its job.

Such are the implicit conclusions of the author of the present little book on the writing of letters in college public relations. Explicitly, Mr. Butterfield urges the college official not to wait upon the formal need or occasion but to write "those 'extra' letters" which take much of their effectiveness from the fact that they are unexpected. Congratulate the student or the alumnus upon his newest accomplishment, he says, as soon as you learn of it. Welcome the parent or other lay friend of the college to events at your institution in which he may be interested, even though he possibly cannot attend. Make your tone friendly and personal. Even letters which