

Review Articles

The University Library

The University Library, its Organization, Administration and Functions. Louis R. Wilson and Maurice F. Tauber. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1945. x, 570p.

This book, replete with statistics, tables, and charts, completely documented throughout and devoted to an exhaustive and authoritative analysis and discussion of all the facets and problems of university librarianship, is a must item for every university library administrator. If he is planning a new building, debating the merits of divisional subject reading rooms versus the more traditional large main reading room and rooms housing material by form, struggling with the problem of independent departmental libraries opposed to centralized control, contemplating a survey of his library, planning a general staff reorganization, or concerned with any one of a dozen other problems, he can turn to this volume with confidence and find a discussion of present and past practice and citation of the more important literature bearing on his problem, whatever it may be.

The authors, in projecting their study, set for themselves the following ambitious goals:

To review the changes which have taken place in the university library . . . ; to consider systematically the principles and methods of university library administration . . . ; to formulate generalizations concerning the organization, administration and functions of the university library . . . ; to aid the university administrator in understanding the role of the library in the total administration of the university; to acquaint faculty members and members of learned societies with the problems which adequate service to them involves . . . ; to make available to students of library science a body of principles and methods bearing upon the specific problems of university library administration.

Obviously, these varied intentions could not all be fulfilled with equal success. What the authors have achieved is definitely a book by librarians, for librarians. While it will undoubtedly be quoted repeatedly for the edification of administrators and faculty members, the university administrator or faculty member who will read it will be rare indeed.

As a matter of fact, perhaps not too many librarians will read its 570 pages in detail but every university library administrator worthy of the name, whether in a chief, divisional, or departmental capacity, and all university librarians of professional caliber will know this book and refer to it repeatedly. It is in this respect and as a comprehensive statement for students of university librarianship that it will be most useful. As a matter of fact the volume suffers, in places, as a tool for the practicing administrator, by the detail, sometimes seemingly obvious, which is included presumably for the library school student. Perhaps it is this pedagogic bent that accounts for the aura of the doctoral dissertation which in places pervades the volume.

The authors point out repeatedly the lack of adequate study of many of the problems they discuss and the need for further investigation. The assertion in regard to centralized versus departmental reference service, that "conclusive generalization cannot be made concerning this controversial matter until extensive data have been systematically gathered and analyzed" is typical of the consideration of many problems throughout the book. That progress is being rapidly made in studying pressing problems and developing a substantial professional literature of caliber is indicated by the bibliographies supporting each chapter. The chapter on acquisitions and preparations, as an example, cites such significant contributions as Downs's *Union Catalogs in the United States*; Kellar's "Memoranda on Library Cooperation;" Raney's *The University Libraries*; Mann's *Introduction to Cataloging and Classification of Books*; Van Hoesen's "Perspective in Cataloging;" and similar studies. A noteworthy feature of the supporting bibliographies in general is their recency. Of the sixty-one citations supporting the acquisitions chapter, not a single one is older than 1930 and most fall in the late thirties and early forties. Anyone projecting a study, as recently as two decades ago, of the scope and quality of the one here under review would have found a thin literature indeed on which to base it.

Another interesting factor is the frequency with which the phrases "unpublished master's study" and "unpublished dissertation" appear in the bibliographical notes. The frequent citations of unpublished material of this kind indicate how extensively we are indebted to and rely on the work of library school students in understanding and mastering our problems. This is not to be deplored but it may be hoped that more and more we may provide opportunity for mature and experienced librarians systematically to study the problems of the profession independently and not necessarily in pursuit of additional degrees. An extension of sabbatical leaves on pay to university librarians generally, which the authors stress as important, would permit further and more rapid progress in mature and scholarly study of our many problems needing systematic investigation.

The authors, in every phase of librarianship they discuss, review the problems involved and the efforts to solve them as reflected in the literature. They often seem studiously to refrain from making pronouncements or leaning to one school of thought more than another. This is undoubtedly due to the lack of systematic and detailed studies of many of the problems they consider. An example of careful balance is the chapter on library buildings. It provides an excellent review of past and present trends and the newer developments in library architecture but it does not give an expression of opinion as to the relative merits of the more or less standardized monumental buildings and the new functional divisional reading room buildings. This much, it seems, could be expected of experienced administrators and careful students of university librarianship, even though the newer functional divisional type of building which has recently come into favor undoubtedly is not the last word in library architectural planning. At least, the costly and now very obvious mistakes of many of the monumental buildings erected in the twenties and thirties could have been stressed much more extensively than they have been.

Two Parts

Although not formally so divided the book falls into two chief parts. The first of these, constituting the major portion, is concerned with the details of library organization, administration, housekeeping. These some 380

pages will be fairly familiar to the average librarian of some experience and background. The second part is concerned with the wider aspects of the functions of the university library, one might almost say with the end product for which all our meticulous organization, management, and housekeeping exists. Considered in this section are such matters as the teaching function of the library, the off-campus relations of the librarian, cooperation and specialization, and the future of the university library.

Particularly challenging the attention of this reviewer in the first part is the excellent chapter on administrative organization which is one of the strongest and most useful chapters in the book. The statement in this chapter, however, that "one of the glaring faults" of university librarians is a lack of progressiveness and unwillingness to permit departmental heads to experiment with new devices and procedures is a matter that works both ways. As often as not, resistance, either passive or open, to experimentation and change, comes from the department head and also rank-and-file workers. Many administrators are stymied by this situation, for obviously no change of importance can be successfully undertaken without the enthusiastic support of the persons in charge of carrying it out.

This chapter has an excellent summary of the departmental library versus centralized library situation which merits the close attention of librarians and presidents and deans alike. Performance in this matter in many of our universities, some of them noted for excellence of administration in other matters, is far from ideal. For this reason and because there is a tendency for systems already centralized to decentralize, the following statement of the authors, which this reviewer subscribes to as basically sound, deserves to be quoted.

New departmental libraries should be established and maintained outside the general library only upon the official approval of the president and the librarian. All expenditures for library materials and the arrangement for using them should be made under the direction of the university librarian. All libraries on the campus should be administrative parts of the general library.

More than one university president and his librarian need to read and ponder the in-

escapable common sense and wisdom of these words.

Chapters on Personnel

Of special interest in the first section, at least to this reviewer, are the two chapters on personnel. Included, very appropriately, is emphasis on in-service training, attendance at meetings, leaves for study, and promotions as recognition of special achievement. To the degree that these recommendations are put into effect in our various libraries, we will develop a professional personnel of worthy caliber. The principles of ethical staff relations within the library, while well known and generally accepted by informed librarians, may well be read and reflected on by all of us. The consideration of this matter seems to place the chief burden on the administrator, but here again there is a reciprocal responsibility for the staff at large which deserves more emphasis than has been given it.

The lack of classification of university library positions of which the authors complain, is not, in our universities, a situation peculiar to the libraries. It extends, in many, perhaps in most of our institutions, to the whole personnel, including the teaching and research faculty. While it is true that faculty members range from instructors to professors and deans, promotions and advances in these various categories are often a matter of expediency and frequently the relationship between salary and rank, again as a matter of expediency, is not too close. Under these circumstances it is difficult for university library administrators to set up, as good personnel administration requires, neatly classified and described position and pay classifications, with regular salary increments within the various classifications.

The authors rightly say that "the appointment of the chief librarian is, without doubt, one of the most important administrative decisions the president of a university has to make." Included in their consideration of this matter is a logical well-reasoned refutation of some comparatively recent statements that professional training of the head librarian is not important. Especially to be applauded in this section is the assertion that nonlibrarians, if appointed, owe all their time and energy to their libraries and to the cause of university librarianship.

The authors defend the university library

against the charge that it has, in emphasizing the acquisition of research materials, neglected the undergraduate student. They say that if the university is to do research it must have the books and general library facilities to support the program. This is obviously true, but the emphasis on research materials which followed the last war need not be as one-sided as it has been and is. If only a very small portion of the thought, energy, and money which our large universities have poured into acquiring research materials can be devoted to meeting the library needs of the undergraduates the justifiable criticism of the university in this matter can be completely met.

Existing practices and procedures in our universities are not as easily changed as the book sometimes infers. After acknowledging that other agencies of the university, and particularly the extension division, have generally assumed the responsibility for acquiring and caring for films relating to their particular activity, they go on to say that it may be expected that the university library of the future will be the film center of the entire university. It can be safely predicted that those agencies now acquiring and using film will tenaciously retain their prerogatives and priority in the field. Any changes in a well-developed situation of this kind will either require administrative edict, usually a questionable device, or else exceptional diplomacy and tact, if the library is to take over and develop work already under way in this field. Progress in this matter will require an informed alertness on the part of all library administrators and a readiness to assume initiative, on their own, for all auditory and visual records of the experience of mankind, however recorded. Progress in the beginning, at least, is more likely to be in addition to the services of existing agencies rather than in replacement of it.

The Teaching Function

In considering the teaching function of the library it is noted that there is now, in universities generally, little or no organized instruction in use of the library provided for undergraduate students. A positive rather than a passive library program in this matter is urged, cooperatively planned by faculty and librarians. This again illustrates the university tendency to neglect the undergrad-

uate. There is a no-man's land here between faculty and library which requires the close attention of library administrators, perhaps through a regularly constituted teaching division of the library. Ten thousand dollars or so in salaries at this point might pay surprisingly rich dividends in which the promotion of effective research, in which our universities are so interested, would inevitably be included.

A detailed and very interesting chapter is devoted to the important matter of cooperation and specialization. Most of this is concerned with developments of the last two decades, with considerable attention to the organization of union catalogs, union lists of serials, bibliographical centers, cooperative and centralized cataloging, to interlibrary lending, inter-institutional and regional agreements, specialization, and similar matters. Here, in the opinion of this reviewer, by the mandate of necessity, lies one of the most important areas for future library progress. While this is a book on university libraries, this chapter might have stressed, much more than it does, the importance of public libraries in these varied joint enterprises. One of the interesting features of the operation of the Pacific Northwest Bibliographic Center in Seattle is the extent to which it has increased interlibrary lending among libraries within its area, thereby reducing the burden on larger outlying libraries. Much of this increase has fallen on the larger public libraries of the region, such as Spokane, Portland, Seattle, Tacoma, and Vancouver. In some of these public libraries interlibrary lending, much of it to colleges and universities, has increased as much as 400 per cent since the Bibliographic Center began functioning. Here, as well as in the matter of specialization and financial support of joint enterprises promoting regional and national cooperation, the public libraries and university libraries have common cause. Libraries of every category must indeed stand together and work together if, as the former Librarian of Congress once said, we are to "win the battle against the flood of materials which are going to drown us all out of all our buildings."

In considering the off-campus relations of the librarian the very effective device of setting forth briefly, as examples, the regional, national, and international scholarly contributions of outstanding librarians is used. In-

cluded among the librarians whose achievements are so discussed are Justin Winsor, Melvil Dewey, Ernest Cushing Richardson, William Warner Bishop, James Thayer Gerould, M. Llewellyn Raney, Charles C. Williamson, Charles W. Smith, Malcolm Wyer, A. F. Kuhlman, Robert Bingham Downs, Charles E. Rush, Charles Harvey Brown, Keyes D. Metcalf, and two non-university librarians who have made important contributions in the college and university field, Harry Miller Lydenberg and Herbert Putnam. All university librarians could readily add to this list former and present librarians who have made outstanding contributions outside their own libraries. Certainly in any list of distinguished national achievement the senior author of the book here reviewed would rank high indeed.

Records, Reports, and Surveys

Particularly interesting and pertinent is the chapter on records, reports, and surveys and the part that they have played and can play in assisting us to understand and solve our problems. Every practicing university librarian should read this chapter carefully. A good many of us could profit particularly by the discussion on the annual report and the part that it can take both in interpreting the work of the library to its own staff and as a contribution to our professional literature. Too many university librarians content themselves with a bare and uninspired collection of the annual statistics accompanied by a minimum of routine comment. This reviewer confesses to a sense of disappointment over each such report encountered.

Rather than a brief summary to be tossed off in an afternoon, preparation of the annual report should be a period of careful analyzing and recording of the successes and failures of the year. This, if properly done, must necessarily occupy the major attention of the librarian for a considerable period of time. Only so could the excellent reports from Michigan, North Carolina, Minnesota, and other universities which the authors cite be prepared. This reviewer can testify that these and similar reports have been a considerable factor in his own professional education. In preparing reports all of us could profit by carefully studying the streamlined easy reading reports of Archibald MacLeish as Librarian of Congress. Mr.

MacLeish has brilliantly demonstrated that the detailed operations of a large library can be presented with verve and éclat which definitely holds the interest and thereby better portrays the events of the year. Few of us can hope to achieve the MacLeishian skill with words but our profession would definitely benefit if more of us would seriously try.

The final chapter of the book is a brief consideration of the future of the university library. This, in the opinion of the writer, is one of the least satisfactory chapters in the book. It portrays well enough the present stage of our development, present trends, and opportunity for additional study, but the authors miss an opportunity to come dramatically to grips (and basically it is a dramatic situation) with the enormous and ever-increasing complexity of assimilating the graphic and auditory records of mankind for ready use. Which way our libraries will turn before this ever-increasing task; at what point, if any, our growing miles of books will be too far removed from a central delivery desk to make their delivery feasible; how indexing and cataloging problems will be handled; what part mechanical gadgets and the shrinking of the size of our books by photographic or other methods, will play in future librarianship; what developments of vast central storage reservoirs we are likely to have; whether the book of the future will be instantaneously or

almost instantaneously transported from such reservoirs to whatever outlying point at which it may be needed, physically or in image—all these and similar matters could, it seems, have been dealt with more imaginatively without moving too far into the world of fancy. Certainly, such a challenging conception as Fremont Rider's microcard book deserves more than the five lines it rates.

Summary

In summary, we have in this book an exceptionally important addition to our professional literature. It could have been more facile and concise in writing but it is an adequate and very complete consideration of the problems of university librarianship which we have long needed and for which all of us will be duly and continuously grateful as we have occasion to use it again and again. Perhaps only those who were intimately concerned with its production can fully appreciate the discussion and planning, the long hours of reading, checking, and writing, the work and sweat that must have gone into its preparation. It constitutes an important and major star in the already bright professional diadem of the senior author. For the junior author it represents an outstanding professional contribution of the kind we are now beginning to expect increasingly from our younger men.—*William H. Carlson.*

The Library School Curriculum

Evaluation and Revision of the Library School Curriculum. Edward A. Wight. (Peabody Contributions to Library Education, No. 1) Nashville, Peabody Press, 1945. v, 64p. \$1.10.

Curriculum evaluation and revision is perforce a continuous process, but it is subject to acceleration and deceleration. The current acceleration in changes in training for library service is not due primarily to current social changes but to a deep dissatisfaction with past practices and results. Library training is generally agreed to involve certain fundamental techniques, special knowledge of the clientele served, and subject knowledge. The patterns of interrelationship of these three

phases of training are exceedingly complex. Much of the recent curriculum revision seems to consist of altering the relative quantities, the chronological sequences, and the methods of teaching of these three. Librarians are expert classifiers, but the content of their training defies with kaleidoscopic impudence all attempts to arrange it in rectilinear sequence.

In the impressive pamphlet in hand, Dr. Wight presents the worksheets of a recent curriculum evaluation and revision at the Peabody library school. The introductory chapter includes an excellent definition of the modern library in terms of social values and of the library school as the agency for preparing library personnel. There follows