

# Faculty Rank of Professional Librarians—Part I

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THE university library is the laboratory for teaching and research in the humanities and the social studies;<sup>1</sup> it is an auxiliary laboratory in the sciences. The undergraduate student may rely heavily upon one or two textbooks in a few of his courses, but in many courses the basic text is but the introduction to a wide range of reading, and in some courses the textbook has been dispensed with altogether. At the graduate level of study, the library is an indispensable source of information and service. The same is true of the faculty's need in furthering good teaching and research.

A well-stocked library is taken for granted in a university. The book and periodical collections must be well-developed and currently maintained to serve both the undergraduate college need in general education and the graduate and faculty need in research. What does this imply for the library staff?

<sup>1</sup>In preparing this preliminary discussion of educational theory underlying the assignment of academic rank to professional librarians, frequent reference was made to the following:

Wilson, L. R., and Tauber, M. F. "Personnel: Salaries and Staff Relations," and "The Teaching Function of the University Library." In their *The University Library: Its Organization, Administration, and Functions*, chapters 8 and 12. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1945.

Lyle, Guy R. "The Changing College Library," "The Teaching Service of the College Library," and "Personnel." In his *The Administration of the College Library*, chapters 1, 7 and 9. New York, H. W. Wilson, 1945.

The library program is basically concerned with teaching and learning, with adapting the library to instructional needs, and with improving student work and achievement. It is important, therefore, that the library staff have a thorough academic training, technical library training, and an understanding of the problems teachers and students encounter in pursuing their studies. To be able to appraise the objectives of the college and university program, to study the library needs of courses and research projects, and to translate this knowledge into library procedures designed to further the ends of instruction, require qualifications of personnel as exacting as those required for teaching.

The general principle underlying faculty-library cooperation is the simple one that the library can function effectively only as an integral part of the whole instructional organization. The faculty work under a distinct handicap when the library staff is not aware of the teaching methods and objectives in the different departments and in the university as a whole. On the other hand, the library is limited in the services it can render to teaching without an alert faculty which appreciates and uses these services. For the best service, each is dependent upon the other for intelligent understanding and full cooperation. There is a growing inclination on the part of college administrators and faculties to look upon the library

in connection with the entire curriculum as definitely instructional. This trend reflects not merely modifications of old forms of service, but includes variations in vitally important functions of the library as illustrated by the divisional plan incorporated in some of the newer university library buildings.

It must be recognized that many students enter the university with very little experience in the use of library materials. The catalogs, reference aids, and general resources of the university library are so extensive and complex as to make their use difficult for the uninitiated. Graduate study and research are largely dependent upon a knowledge of the literature and source materials in the field of specialization.

The essential elements in an effective program of library interpretation must include the orientation of freshmen, and other new students, and their instruction, at an elementary level, in the use of the college library. Further instruction must be undertaken at advanced undergraduate and beginning graduate levels to encourage a full comprehension and use of the services and resources of the university's system of libraries. To some extent this work should be formalized through classroom teaching. Supplementing a formal program, however, a great deal can and must be done informally. The interpretation of the library goes on constantly at almost every point of contact between students and librarians in the central library and the several branches. Open-shelf collections in reading rooms are developed partly in the hope of stimulating student interest in reading still further.

The university library spends a substantial part of the university's funds for books and periodicals and service. It is housed in a relatively expensive university building, and branch libraries are maintained in other

buildings. All of this equipment and personnel is intended to facilitate instruction and research. It will contribute effectively if it is consciously utilized for this purpose.

Administering the library at the level of good housekeeping implies effective and economical organization in the acquisition and processing of materials, and efficiency in maintaining good order in the book collection and accurate records thereof. Administering the library at the level of teaching and research, to enable the library to make its maximum contribution to the university in the attainment of its educational objectives, implies that the library must play a positive role in university education. Such administration is based upon two assumptions: that learning is promoted by various methods, including the use of the library as well as the lecture, discussion, laboratory exercise, field trip, and so on; and that the library can be administered so as to make a significant contribution to the learning process.

Such administration must emphasize competence and specialization in the library staff and facilities for close cooperation with the faculty. It calls for a program of library interpretation that is not casual or incidental, but so carefully planned and well directed that students and faculty secure maximum assistance from the library. The position of the staff in library service is pivotal. The students and faculty are peculiarly sensitive to its abilities, good judgment, tact and initiative.

At the housekeeping level the ordinary routines of ordering, processing and circulating books are maintained. But close cooperation between the library and the faculty in developing the collections, and in the interpretation of the collections to the students and faculty at every level of instruction and research, implies the employment of a library staff with training and

experience commensurate with these responsibilities.

No sharp line of cleavage can be drawn between the library's educational staff at the public desks and the professional staff in the library's auxiliary services of ordering, cataloging and circulating materials. Buying books is an essential adjunct of the book selection process and the latter is a responsibility shared with the faculty, to some extent, by the entire professional staff. The cataloging and classification of books is sometimes regarded as the most continuous scholarly activity in the library, and while the circulation of books is a more or less clerical operation, the loan desk is the focal point of contact between the patron and the library. At this desk he is assisted in identifying his wants in the card catalog nearby and in understanding the organization and contents of the several reading rooms, the central stacks, and the branch libraries. The entire professional staff must comprise a closely coordinated team if it is successfully to implement the educational program of the university at a high level of competence.

A continual effort must be made, with these responsibilities in mind, to recruit and retain a professional staff whose individual members have a broad basic academic training, some graduate training in the subject areas in which they work, technical competence in librarianship, and an understanding of the objectives of higher education. A sincere interest in the educational process and those traits of character and personality that make a good teacher are no less requisite than academic and professional training and experience.

If the library is accepted as an integral part of the educational organization and its services at the level of teaching and research are regarded as indispensable, it should be clear that the library professional staff

must be closely integrated with the composite faculty of the several colleges and schools that may comprise the university. One of the most effective measures toward achieving such integration is the assignment of academic rank to these staff members to a degree that is commensurate with their duties and responsibilities and with the education, experience, and other qualifications which they individually possess.

Academic rank can be recommended as a means of identifying the library staff with the academic or teaching and research staff, rather than with the administrative or clerical staff. In fact, on many campuses academic rank has been assigned to librarians because it is the most convenient and effective means available for securing this close integration between teaching and library personnel.

Academic rank carries with it certain rewards and privileges which in turn enable the director of libraries to recruit and retain staff members with better educational background and greater ability than would otherwise be available. Among these rewards and privileges, for example, is a salary scale appropriate to the education, experience, and responsibilities of the staff, with suitable prospect of salary advancement; likewise provision for tenure in the upper ranks, participation in a retirement plan on the same basis as the faculty, longer annual vacations, sickness and disability leaves, sabbatical leaves and special short leaves for study, travel or investigation, and encouragement to attend and participate in the activities of professional associations.

It may be well to clarify a common point of confusion in the application of rank as distinguished from the assignment of title. In a complex organization such as a university, each position might be subjected to a careful analysis of its duties and responsibilities and a title assigned to the incumbent

of each position more or less accurately descriptive of the work he is expected to perform. Presumably the title assigned to each librarian is descriptive of his work, just as the titles of deans and professors are broadly descriptive of their work. Cutting across these various groups, however, and irrespective of whether they are instructors, extension workers, research staff, librarians or others, the concept of rank groups them on the basis of similarity or comparability in duties, responsibilities and requisite education, experience, and personal capacities. It may be appropriate to assign professorial title to librarians only in those instances in which the librarian is actually teaching or doing research in a manner suitable to the common understanding of these terms on university campuses. But this should not preclude the assignment of appropriate academic rank to these same librarians in recognition of duties and responsibilities and personal qualifications which are comparable to those of others in the academic community to whom such rank is commonly assigned. In other words, the title of professor may properly and literally be restricted to one who teaches in the classroom, but the rank of professor may be applied to a librarian, an administrative officer, or some other individual whose preparation and attainments entitle him to this recognition.

Ten years ago Miriam C. Maloy undertook to survey the status of college librarians.<sup>2</sup> Her questionnaire was distributed to libraries in large colleges and universities, in small colleges, and in teachers colleges and normal schools. Her findings have been summarized and tabulated in Lyle's *The Administration of the College Library*<sup>3</sup> and in Wilson and Tauber's *The Univer-*

*sity Library*.<sup>4</sup> Among 35 large college and university libraries, Maloy found that 28 chief librarians had faculty status, seven did not; 12 assistant librarians had status, 10 did not; in 13 institutions department heads had status, in 10 they did not; in eight institutions professional assistants had status, in 11 they did not.

McMillen, former director of libraries at Louisiana State University, surveyed "the relation of members of the library staff to the faculty and the numerous other employees of the university" and published a report of his study in 1940.<sup>5</sup> His report was based upon letters from 37 university libraries with collections in excess of 200,000 volumes each.

McMillen's summary disclosed no widespread appreciation of the prominence of the educational function of university librarians in their daily work as a logical basis upon which an appeal for faculty rank might be based, nor of the principal reason for establishing academic rank for librarians, namely to secure the several benefits and privileges in the academic community to which their training and responsibilities would appear to entitle them. McMillen reported:

Only eleven institutions have specific regulations on this matter and but four definitely have rules stating that members of the professional library staff are classed as members of the faculty. In seven universities the members of the library staff are considered as a special professional group and are, therefore, set apart from other administrative employees. Of the twenty-six institutions remaining, ten definitely rate library workers, except some departmental heads, as administrative employees, while sixteen have no particular rank assigned to professional library members. . . .

Judging from the replies, the librarian or

<sup>2</sup> Maloy, Miriam C. "Faculty Status of College Librarians." *A.L.A. Bulletin*, 33:232-233, 302, April 1939.

<sup>3</sup> *Op.cit.*, p.278-281.

<sup>4</sup> *Op.cit.*, p.280.

<sup>5</sup> McMillen, James A. "Academic Status of Library Staff Members of Large Universities." *College and Research Libraries*, 1:138-140, March 1940.



director of the library is almost invariably given academic rank, usually as professor and in one or two cases as dean. While the rank of associate librarian does not prevail in all institutions, these officials are counted as members of the faculty in twenty institutions while only eleven universities include heads of library departments among the faculty.

McEwen, then librarian of Carleton College, reviewed the problem of status for the Minnesota Library Association in 1941.<sup>6</sup> He, like McMillen, failed fully to appreciate the educational work of the professional members of the library staff and the importance of the educational function of the library to all teaching and research carried on by the college. Nevertheless, he expressed sympathetic understanding of the librarians' need to become a part of the academic community for both professional and personal reasons and urged that librarians not only seek favorable administrative action and participate individually in teaching and research whenever possible, but that they also analyze the close relationship between their work and the whole program of teaching and research.

In order to learn what general progress had been made in the application of academic rank to librarians since these studies by Maloy, McMillen and others had been reported, the following questions were addressed, in September and October of 1946, to the librarians of 35 large colleges and universities:

Do professional employees in the library have faculty rank at your University? If so, in what ranks? On what basis is rank assigned? Do you consider this application of faculty rank desirable?

Replies were received from all 35.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> McEwen, Robert W. "The Status of College Librarians." *College and Research Libraries*, 3:256-261, June 1942.

<sup>7</sup> The author can make available upon request a full bibliography of this correspondence. Specific references to these letters are omitted in the following pages.

In December 1948, after academic rank had been secured for the library's professional staff at the University of Nebraska, letters were again addressed to the 35 correspondents in order to bring their information up-to-date in form suitable for quotation. In the early weeks of 1949 all 35 again responded.

The situations in two of these institutions, the Louisiana State University and the University of Illinois, have recently been reported in detail in the professional literature. They afford interesting studies of the application of faculty rank to librarians.

*Personnel Plan for the Louisiana State University Library Staff*<sup>8</sup>

The Louisiana State University Library has developed a classification and pay plan to create conditions which will attract staff members of high quality to the library's service. One purpose underlying its classification of personnel is to identify the library staff with the teaching staff rather than with the administrative or clerical staffs.

A library assistant or subprofessional is a college graduate with previous library experience, special subject training or formal courses in librarianship, but no library degree. Junior librarians are graduates of library schools but beginners in the profession. Senior librarians are the experienced group and constitute the majority of the staff. In this group, graduate training in subject fields is often desirable. Senior librarians are frequently given supervisory responsibilities; assistant librarians are department heads. In this group master's degrees in librarianship or in subject fields, and varied but related experience, are requisite. Above the department heads are

<sup>8</sup> Harrington, Roseanne H., and Lyle, Guy R. "Recruiting and Developing a Library Staff." *College and Research Libraries*, 8:427-435, October 1947.

the associate director and the chief of technical processes.

Junior librarians are appointed with the rank of assistant, initially for one year and subject to annual renewal, but without tenure. Senior librarians are appointed with rank of instructor, initially for one year and subject to annual renewal for three years, but with tenure of indefinite duration thereafter. Assistant librarians are appointed with rank of assistant professor, initially for a period not to exceed three years, but with tenure of indefinite duration thereafter. Associate directors, with rank of associate professor, may be appointed initially for a stipulated term, but thereafter have tenure of indefinite duration.

A junior librarian will reach the maximum salary for his grade at approximately the same time that his experience will justify promotion to the next rank. It is assumed that a staff member at the junior level who does not merit promotion after reaching the maximum salary for his grade is probably not worth retaining on the staff. Senior librarians enjoy a larger salary range than junior librarians. The need for this is obvious since opportunities for promotion in rank from this group are limited by the number of departments headed by assistant librarians. The library must offer inducements other than promotion in rank to retain the services of Senior librarians, one being the prospect of continued salary advancement over a period of years. Similarly, the more liberal provisions of tenure available for librarians than for faculty with rank of instructor or assistant professor, are justified on the ground that there is very limited opportunity for library appointees below the rank of associate professor attaining a rank where provisions of teaching tenure apply.

The university retirement plan provides for automatic retirement and a pension at the age of 70, the amount depending on the

length of service and the annual salary. The optional plan is membership in the Louisiana Teachers' Retirement System, which is based on contributions by the staff member matched by university funds. Both librarians and teachers have their choice between the two systems.

Library staff members who have worked a full year are entitled to 30 calendar days of annual leave. Librarians who have been on the staff less than a year are granted annual leave on a pro-rata basis. All staff members have, in addition, 16 university-wide holidays.

The maximum sick leave is 30 days with full pay during any fiscal year and not more than 60 days during the first five-year period of employment. Those who have served over 15 years may be granted as much as six months' sick leave with full pay during the fourth five-year period of employment and during each succeeding five-year period. Any additional time required may be recommended as leave without pay. The staff code states that annual leave and sick leave benefits shall be the same for the library staff as for the teaching and research staffs.

Continued study by members of the library professional staff is stimulated and encouraged by various means. A staff member may, with the approval of his department head, enrol for one class related to his work, with the time for class meetings being deducted from his regular schedule of 39 hours per week. The tendency has been for staff members to take courses in foreign languages which benefit both the library and the individual librarian. The university regulations governing sabbatical leave for the teaching staff apply to all members of the library staff with the rank of assistant librarian or higher. Such staff members may, upon the completion of six consecutive years of service, be granted 12 months' leave with one-half pay, or six months' leave with

full pay, for study, research or other equally meritorious pursuit. Shorter leaves with pay may be granted to any member of the library staff for the purpose of advanced study. The maximum period for such shorter terms shall be two months, exclusive of the regular annual vacation leave. The term "advanced study" is interpreted to include individual research and travel for professional observation, as well as attendance at formal school sessions. Staff members are encouraged by being allowed time off and, when possible, by financial assistance, to attend meetings of the various professional associations.

This Louisiana State University Library staff plan is based upon several assumptions or principles, among them the following: (1) If the library is to be an integral part of the educational program, the library staff should be identified with the teaching faculty rather than with the administrative or clerical staff. (2) Every librarian should know his status in relation to others on the staff and his chances for advancement in salary and promotion in rank. (3) The professional growth and development of an individual staff member through formal study and through participation in professional activities has a direct and perceptible effect on the staff member's ability to contribute to good library service.

The university librarian adds that this personnel plan is by no means static. There is every indication that the code will be subject to further revision and modification to meet the new problems which result from changing conditions in the library and in the profession as a whole.

#### *Personnel Plan for the University of Illinois Library Staff<sup>9</sup>*

On the assumption that librarians in colleges and universities perform functions

<sup>9</sup> Downs, Robert Bingham. "Academic Status for University Librarians—a New Approach." *College and Research Libraries*, 7:6-9, 26, January 1946.

similar in kind to those carried on by the teaching staff, a general reorganization of the University of Illinois Library staff recently took place.

As now defined in the university statutes, the academic staff which conducts the educational program shall consist of the teaching, the research and the extension staffs, deans, directors of educational departments, high school visitors, librarians and such other members of the staff as are designated by the president.

Careful investigation disclosed that about 20 librarians had regular teaching responsibilities, including library school lectures, courses in the use of the library, instructional tours of the library and participation in courses offered by other departments. A considerably larger number, perhaps 50, were actively engaged in research or directly assisting faculty and graduate research programs. In this group were reference librarians, departmental librarians, bibliographers and catalogers. Less directly, but just as concretely, a sound case could be made out for the aid given teaching and research by other members of the library staff. Reference is made throughout, of course, to the professional staff and not to secretaries, typists, bookkeepers and other assistants commonly employed in campus offices.

Further analysis showed that 50 librarians had master's or doctor's degrees in library or special subject fields. Forty-three had one year of professional training beyond college graduation and most of these were working toward master's degrees. In short, over 50 per cent of the staff had from two to four years of professional training, comparing favorably in this respect to the instructional group. Frequently, and especially in the case of departmental and divisional librarians, combination training was required, including not only a library school degree but knowledge of such fields as chemistry, biological sciences, law, agri-

culture, engineering, education, art, medicine, modern and classical languages, history, social sciences and journalism.

Academic titles were assigned only to those having actual teaching responsibilities, a total of 20 individuals. Provision was made to give rank, but not titles, to approximately 90 staff members. These ranks are shown in contracts, directories, catalogs and any other sources in which the librarians' names may be listed, thus clearly defining their status. All staff members were assigned professional titles descriptive of their positions and grouped in four categories.

(1) Library assistants, with the rank of assistant. This group includes full-time and part-time assistants in all departments of the library. (2) Librarians, with the rank of instructor and with the title of instructor when teaching. This group includes assistant heads of medium-size departments, heads of departmental divisions, revisers, catalogers, bibliographers, specialists in subject and library science fields, librarians in charge of some college and departmental libraries and assistant reference librarians. (3) Librarians with the rank of assistant professor and with the title of assistant professor when teaching. This group includes heads of departments, librarians of large departmental libraries, assistant heads of large departments, senior specialists in bibliography, cataloging, reference, administration and subject fields. (4) Librarians with the rank and title of professor or associate professor. This group includes the assistant university librarians for technical services, public service and personnel.

For tenure rules, disability leaves, sabbatical leaves and retirement benefits, librarians receive identical treatment with the teaching staff. Salary scales also correspond to those of similar ranks in the instructional group, with recognition of the fact that, in the case of persons on the teaching staff, service is required only during the

two semesters of the regular academic year, beginning in September and ending in June, while librarians are on twelve-month appointments.

For hours of work, vacations and holidays, librarians are grouped with general administrative officers. This means a work week of 39 hours, an annual vacation of one month and all holidays observed by the university. Incidentally, analogous provisions govern the university's nonteaching research staff in various departments.

In summary, it is the conclusion of those who have given long study to library staff problems at the University of Illinois, first, that professional librarians, by the nature of their functions, definitely belong in the instructional and research group; second, by comparable standards of education and preparation, they qualify for inclusion with the teaching staff; and, third, there are numerous tangible and intangible advantages for librarians in holding an academic classification. With reference to the last point, the factor of staff morale is of primary significance. One can expect the best results from any organization only if its place is clearly understood and appreciated. The improved status of librarians at the University of Illinois is certain to play a major part, as time goes on, in the development of a library staff with a high sense of professional pride and responsibility, conscious of the importance of its work and receiving proper compensation and recognition for its contribution to the institution.

These two personnel plans for the library staffs of Louisiana State University and the University of Illinois present a comparatively thorough review of academic status for librarians in recent actual application. There does, however, appear to be a fallacy in theory and a corresponding weakness in practice reflected in these two case studies, in rigidly correlating academic rank with administrative responsibility in the hierarchy



of library organization. It is not common practice in departments of instruction and research to make promotion to the rank of associate or full professor contingent upon assignment to the departmental chairmanship. In fact, the majority of full professors in a university are assigned no regular administrative responsibilities beyond the usual amount of participation in the work of committees. It is generally considered desirable to free the professor of higher rank from as much of the chore of administration as possible.

The same freedom from purely administrative work may in some instances be highly desirable among members of the library staff and, for precisely the same reason, to enable the staff member to devote his energies to the educational functions of the library at a high level of performance. It does seem to be unnecessarily restrictive to say to a professional librarian, in effect, that unless he succeeds in being appointed to one of the very few top administrative posts in

the library, and otherwise, despite his achievement of advanced degrees and any continuing contribution of high order he may make to the educational program, he will be restricted in promotional possibility to the rank, salary and privileges of an instructor or an assistant professor. To look at it otherwise is to assume that the library is primarily an administrative organization rather than an educational institution and that real educational responsibility can develop only in the higher administrative posts. This is an absurd assumption and in some instances may be quite the opposite from actual fact. It is, of course, easier to administer promotions in a system where the pattern is laid out rigidly in terms of the administrative hierarchy, but so doing tends to avoid an important point at issue, the identification of the librarians with the teaching and research personnel.

*(Part II of this article will appear in a later issue of College and Research Libraries.—Editor)*

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## A Decade of Book Storage at Iowa State College

*(Continued from page 10)*

in storage any longer than necessary. In the judgment of the library staff, these journals should be returned to the central book stack as soon as possible rather than be kept in storage on or off campus.

The other materials, such as the single book titles, including those classified according to the Dewey decimal system and those with the work mark "XS" above the call number, can be held in storage indefinitely without appreciably impairing service at the loan desk. The latter category will grow as the book collections increase in number and as the appearance of new editions and new works makes it possible to store books now in active use. The early runs of general periodicals, the reserve

stock of materials for the exchange program and a partial serial set, while needed on the campus, can just as well be shelved in the low-cost type of housing represented by the library storage building.

If all of the book collections at Iowa State cannot be housed in the central book stack, and this inclusion seems to be unnecessary from the standpoint of service, the next best location for them is in a supplementary storage building on the campus. Since this plan is also an economical solution, there is small likelihood that any plans will be made in the foreseeable future for the library to solve its book storage problem in any other way, whether on an emergency or on a long-range basis.