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Profiles of Practice in the Public Junior College Library

In an effort to delineate an experimental set of quantitative standards for evaluating junior college library service, the authors ranged management data from eighty-six selected junior college libraries on a graded percentile chart. They then plotted the experience of seven "benchmark" institutions on the chart in order to portray their characteristics graphically and comparably. It is their intention to continue developing data on these seven institutions in hope of generating quantitative norms that can be used for evaluative purposes.

IT IS DIFFICULT to formulate specific qualitative criteria by which the adequacy of a public junior college library can be measured. Not quite as difficult, however, is the measuring of quantitative supportive characteristics which form the necessary basis for quality service. It is possible for example, to compare the management data of different libraries with each other, provided the institutions they serve are similar. What is more, it is possible to portray this supportive data graphically so that a given library can see how it compares with certain benchmarks or how it compares with other libraries serving similar institutions.

Henry Ford Community College wanted to make a comparison of its supportive library characteristics with the characteristics of other libraries serving similar colleges. The study that emerged ranges management data taken from *Library Statistics of Colleges and Universities, 1963-64* in percentile rank, suggests benchmarks which change with the years; and demonstrates a technique whereby libraries can graphically compare each other's supportive characteristics such as number of volumes, number of periodicals, number of professional personnel, expenditures per FTE student, and number of square feet of assignable space in the library.[1]

This study finally emerges with the profiles of practice in six libraries. The data of these libraries becomes, in effect, six hypotheses illustrating what the supportive characteristics of a public junior college library ought to be.

The following criteria were used to select the junior colleges to be studied from all the libraries in *Library Statistics:*

1. Only public institutions were chosen.
2. Only two-year institutions were chosen.
3. Only institutions which had been established for at least seven years or more were included.
4. Only institutions with 1,000 full-time (FTE) students or more were selected.
5. Only accredited institutions were included.

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[1] U.S. Office of Education. *Library Statistics of Colleges and Universities, 1963-64. Institutional Data.* Washington: 1965. Student and faculty data supplemented by American Association of Junior Colleges, *Junior College Directory, 1965.* Washington: 1965.

TABLE 1

Percentile	F.T.E. Students	F.T.E. Faculty	Total Vols.	Vols. Added	Vols. Withdrawn	Per. being rec'd	Hrs. of Stud. Asst.	F.T.E. Prof. Pers.	F.T.E. Non-Prof. Pers.	Total Expenditure	Salaries	Wages
99	9,219	335	71,109	8,167	1,880	736	100,000	8.0	9.5	$202,267	$101,361	$18,000
90	6,668	279	42,294	5,036	830	465	6,552	5.0	6.9	104,241	71,426	7,213
80	4,696	226	33,976	4,537	621	382	4,376	4.0	4.5	99,211	54,846	5,663
75	4,535	210	32,285	4,132	576	372	4,197	4.0	4.3	86,097	46,488	5,120
75th Percentile												
70	4,133	193	27,800	3,925	465	350	3,800	3.5	4.0	70,809	40,672	4,501
60	3,031	145	25,306	3,208	350	315	3,316	3.0	3.0	61,325	37,565	3,600
50	2,393	125	22,500	2,437	250	287	2,668	3.0	3.0	55,200	34,819	3,262
Median												
40	2,098	106	20,736	2,120	160	258	2,156	2.5	2.2	46,998	30,142	2,520
30	1,891	96	17,000	1,879	111	230	1,596	2.0	2.0	41,307	24,010	1,892
25	1,772	90	15,946	1,800	100	215	1,450	2.0	2.0	37,825	20,600	1,581
20	1,717	85	15,084	1,679	75	200	1,240	2.0	1.5	33,050	18,200	1,400
10	1,441	66	13,038	1,355	40	164	600	1.0	1.0	24,229	13,255	700
1	1,092	51	8,877	600	1	45	196	1.0	1.0	16,423	7,647	225

TABLE 2

Percentile	Books and Materials	Binding	Other Exp. Exc. C.O.	Library Hours/wk.	Total Area	Stack Area	Seating Area	Staff Area	Other Areas	Exp. Per F.T.E. Stu.	Exp. Per F.T.E. Fac.	Exp. Index
99	$61,472	$3,500	$14,800	78	80,000	23,762	30,000	10,000	20,000	$124	$1,322	9.1
90	36,300	2,290	7,587	68	32,750	16,236	14,750	5,474	8,415	45	904	5.3
80	24,225	1,323	5,299	68	21,900	5,166	9,856	2,720	5,356	28	729	4.5
75	22,472	1,231	4,678	66	20,400	4,800	9,000	2,320	5,119	26	703	4.2
75th Percentile												
70	21,224	1,144	4,135	66	18,850	4,500	8,219	2,250	4,610	24	652	4.1
60	17,970	1,012	2,900	65	15,500	4,000	7,000	1,688	2,563	22	598	3.9
50	14,453	813	1,941	64	13,084	2,500	6,350	1,413	2,300	19	549	3.7
Median												
40	12,688	575	1,514	62	11,000	2,165	4,800	1,200	1,840	18	481	3.4
30	11,500	464	1,008	59	8,944	1,728	3,280	816	1,444	16	465	3.0
25	10,000	354	903	58	6,912	1,555	2,888	679	1,300	15	446	2.8
20	9,300	293	790	57	5,300	1,398	2,610	528	900	14	417	2.6
10	6,350	225	500	52	3,409	960	1,840	304	500	12	235	2.3
1	4,823	100	255	40	1,900	237	900	149	100	5	12	1.6

6. Only institutions listed in *Colleges and Universities, 1963-64* were used.

The application of these criteria resulted in the selection of eighty-six institutions from a total population of 281 public junior college libraries.

All of the raw management data for the eighty-six libraries in this study were converted to percentile ranking. The management categories were ranged across the top of the chart. Percentile gradations were ranged along the left hand column.

From this comprehensive chart, the final graphic presentation was derived. Each management data item which fell on the 1st, 10th, 20th, 25th, 30th and on through the 99th percentile was recorded. The final result is portrayed in Tables 1 and 2.

It is a simple matter to draw a line at the 50th percentile to obtain median benchmarks for institutions in this study.

Median Benchmarks for 1963-64

Number of volumes at the end of year	22,500
Number of volumes added during the year	2,427
Number of volumes withdrawn during year	250
Number of periodicals being received at end of year	287
Number of hours of student assistance	2,668
Number of professional personnel (FTE)	3.0
Number of nonprofessional personnel (FTE)	3.0
Total library expenditures (excluding capital outlay)	$55,200
Salaries	$34,819
Wages	$ 3,262
Books and other library materials	$14,453
Binding	$ 813
Other expenditures	$ 1,941
Hours per week library was open	64
Total square feet assigned to library	13,084
Stack areas	2,500
Seating areas	6,350
Staff and work areas	1,413
Other areas	2,300
Expenditures for library per FTE Student	$ 19
Expenditures per FTE faculty member	$ 549
Expenditure ratio of total library expenditures to total institutional expenditures (excluding capital outlay)	3.7
Extrapolation revealed:	
Books per FTE Student	9.4
Books per FTE Faculty	180

The authors propose that these median benchmarks, updated each year, could possibly form the minimum quantitative threshold standard for adequacy in public junior college libraries throughout the United States. Public junior college libraries falling below these benchmarks, unless special circumstances in their local situation justify a temporary lower level of performance, would be in danger of giving inadequate service to their students and faculty.

As a result of this research, Henry Ford Community College library set as its goal the management data level of the 75th percentile and above. More broadly, it was felt that as a mature public junior college seeking to give good library service to its students and faculty, it would be well advised to use the threshold figures of the 75th percentile or higher as its objective.

Seventy-Fifth Percentile Benchmarks for 1963-64

Number of volumes at the end of year	32,285
Number of volumes added during year	4,132
Number of volumes withdrawn during year	576
Number of periodicals being received at end of year	372

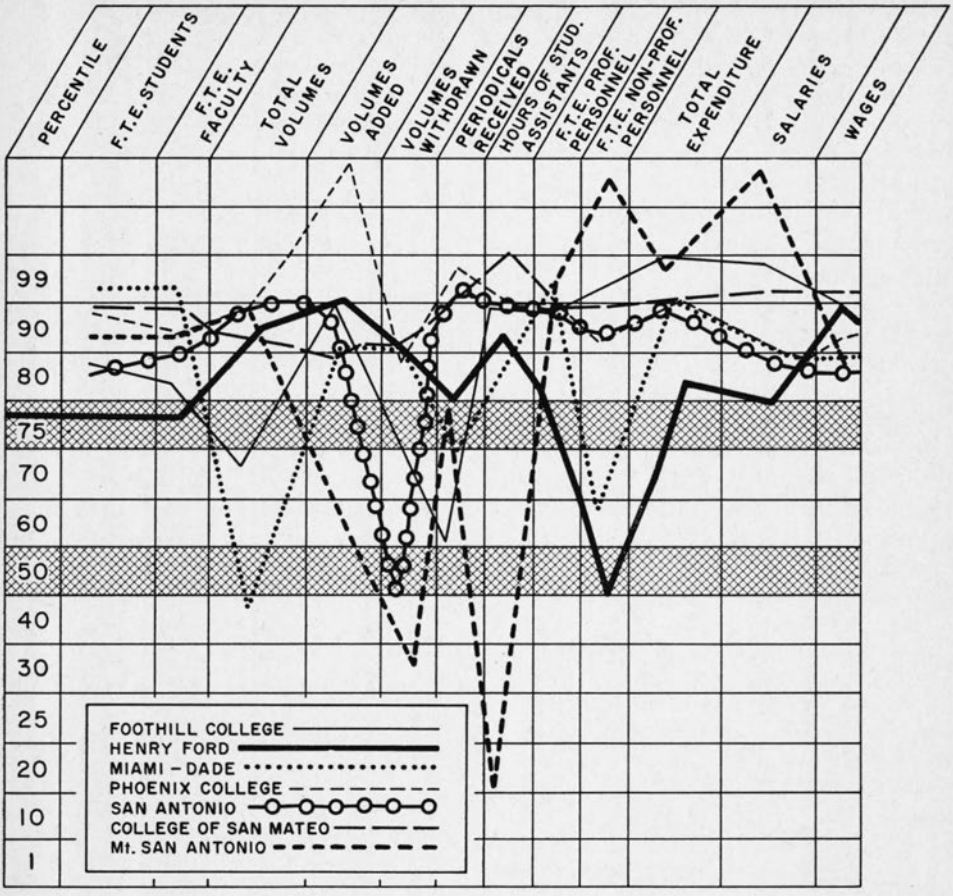

FIG. 1—SELECTED MANAGEMENT DATA ON PUBLIC JUNIOR COLLEGE LIBRARIES

NOTE: Median and 75th percentile ranking indications are for 86 libraries studied.

Number of hours of student assistance	4,197
Number of professional personnel (FTE)	4.0
Number of non-professional personnel (FTE)	4.3
Total library expenditures (excluding capital outlay)	$86,087
Salaries	$46,448
Wages	$ 5,120
Books and other library materials	$22,472
Other expenditures	$ 4,678
Hours per week library was open	66
Total square feet assigned to library	20,400
Stack areas	4,800
Seating areas	9,000
Staff and work areas	2,320
Other areas	5,119
Expenditures for library per FTE student	$ 26.00
Expenditures per FTE faculty member	$703.00
Expenditure ratio of total library expenditures to total institutional expenditures (Excluding capital outlay)	4.2

Extrapolation revealed:

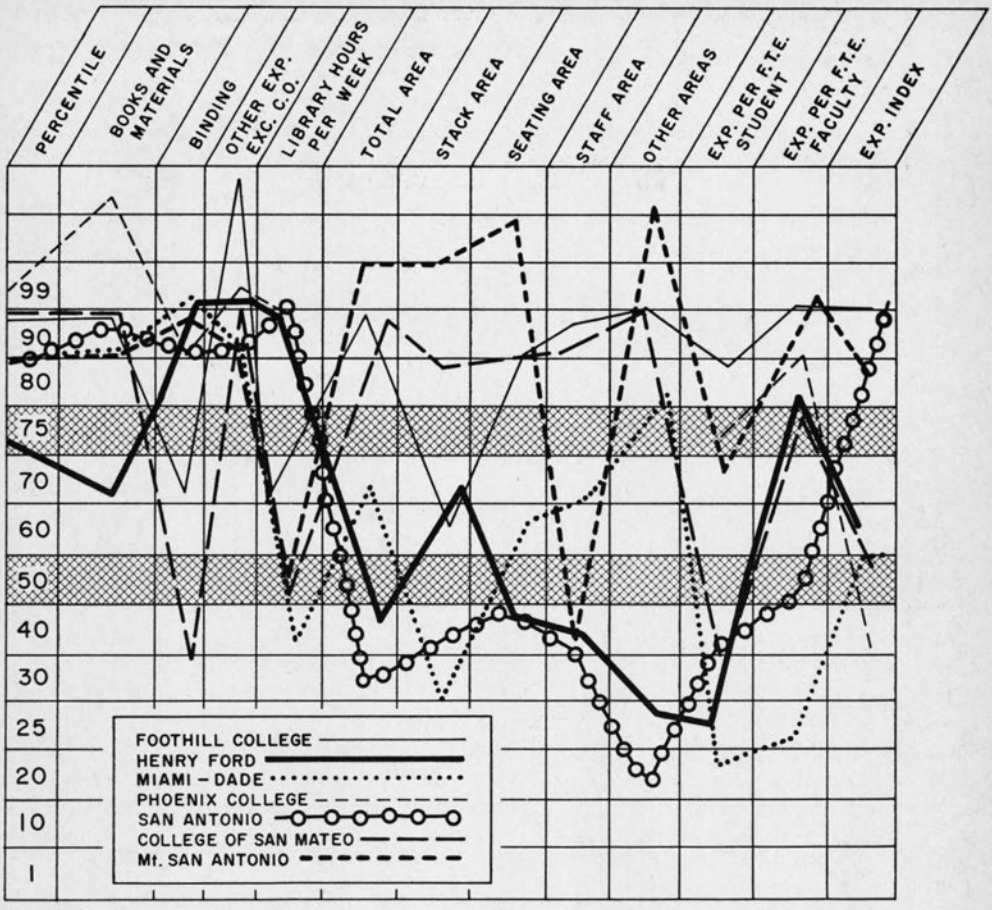

Fig. 1—Selected Management Data (Cont.)

NOTE: Median and 75th percentile ranking indications are for 86 libraries studied.

Books per FTE student .	7
Books per FTE faculty .	106

PROFILES OF PRACTICE

Because the data of all the institutions in this study are ranged on a chart by percentile ranking, it is possible to take the data of any given public junior college library meeting these criteria and graphically portray its profile. This was done with the data of the Henry Ford Community College library, and it was found to indicate a remarkably accurate picture of the practices of the library. Strengths and weaknesses emerged with startling clarity. Lack of adequate clerical personnel, as well as temporary lack of stack and seating space in 1964, were all dramatically evident as the graph line for those items moved far below the 75th percentile line. The large number of gifts from local industry was shown in the peak at "number of volumes added." This graph line, in comparison to the 75th percentile threshold line, presents a significant and useful picture of the management data of the library as we know it.

The authors selected six public junior colleges which had similar enrollments

and curricula and whose management data, for the most part, fell within the top quartile, that is, above the 75th percentile. In addition, these six libraries had a national reputation for quality library service, among librarians and educators. These libraries were: Foothill, San Antonio College, Phoenix College, Mount San Antonio College, Miami-Dade, and the College of San Mateo. These six libraries and Henry Ford's are portrayed in Figures 1 and 2.

Future Study Needed

In future years, the librarians and administrators at Henry Ford Community College intend to watch developments at these six libraries. In effect, these libraries will become the library standards for Henry Ford.

A possible future task for the authors of this study will be to construct a detailed questionnaire for these six institutions together with Henry Ford, in an attempt to understand them better. An evaluation will be sought as to how the management data are affected by:

1. institutional financing
2. patterns of control
3. curriculum
4. number of fields taught
5. number sections of each course taught
6. number of extension offerings off-campus
7. number of experimental programs
8. number of special institutes held on campus
9. number of institutional research projects in process
10. audio-visual holdings
11. amount of inter-library cooperation
12. educational backgrounds of the professional library personnel
13. number of Ph.D.s on the faculty
14. teaching methods
15. intellectual climate of the campus
16. socio-economic characteristics of the community served
17. educational preparation of incoming students
18. ratio of vocational-terminal to college transfer student
19. honors students
20. record of achievement of graduates

As a final step and only if financial support can be found, the authors may consider visiting these six junior college campuses to survey the libraries and to study each institution in its own setting.

It is doubtful that the benchmarks or the profiles of practice as described in this article can be equated with quality library service. They would appear to indicate, however, a library climate in which quality library service becomes possible. The measurement of quality must await the second and third stages of the study. Meanwhile, if one refrains from making qualitative inferences from the benchmarks and profiles of practice herein outlined, he can use these instruments to find out if a library is on the threshold of having the collection, staff, budget, and other characteristics which are important supporting elements. ■■