

Letters

To the Editor:

The title of Joseph Kohut's paper (*CRL*, May 1974), "Allocating the Book Budget: A Model," is misleading. Mr. Kohut does not offer "a mechanism for equitable distribution of book budget funds" (p.199). Instead, he has offered a model for maintaining a given proportion, or "balance," between books and periodicals during years of inflation.

The model does not explain how one originally divides the total budget among funding units nor how each "library resource unit" is subsequently divided into monograph and serial units. If these allocations are arbitrary to begin with, no subsequent correction for inflation will establish "equitable distribution" of funds. The model assumes that the monograph-serial resource unit ratios should remain constant from year to year. What is the rationale for this? For maximum possible equity, or effectiveness, such allocations and ratios should be empirically based on scientifically controlled surveys of library use and user interest.

Mr. Kohut ambitiously states that he "formulated basic goals and assumptions for setting budgetary policies," and that he defined "the underlying principles which should guide these [budgetary] decisions." Nowhere in his paper has he spelled out any such goals, assumptions, or principles. His "major contribution," as he puts it, is much less ambitious—to show how a budget can be divided between periodicals and books for each funding unit, and how the division can be corrected for inflation. And that is useful.

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To the Editor:

In retrospect, the title of my paper, "Allocating the Book Budget: A Model," does

indeed appear to me to be misleading. If Mr. McGrath had, therefore, limited his objection to this point, then this letter would be unnecessary.

In his letter, however, Mr. McGrath states that: "The model assumes that the monograph-serial resource unit ratios should remain constant from year to year." Not true. For simplicity the example assumed this, but the methodology is applicable whether it remains constant or not. Adjustments can be made as long as one continues to measure the collection in terms of resource units, not dollars. Further, Mr. McGrath recommends allocations and ratios "based on scientifically controlled surveys of library use and user interest." Good point. Unfortunately, these are virtually nonexistent for many fields. Where research along these lines has been relatively active, for example, in the sciences (e.g., bibliometric studies) certain relationships (e.g., Bradfordian and Zipf distributions, etc.) indicate a constancy in overall literature use patterns.

Mr. McGrath also states that the model maintains the monograph serial balance "during years of inflation." Inflationary considerations were, of course, the primary reason for this paper, but it should be pointed out that the model also applies to deflationary circumstances and increases or decreases in the actual book budget.

Mr. McGrath is correct in that the "model does not explain how one originally divides the total budget among funding units. . . ." As I stated ". . . criteria are not set here for identifying an optimum proportional distribution of library resources among funding units. . . ." However, whether optimal or not, by expressing their related distribution in forms of resource units rather than dollars, a clearer impression of collection development will result. In fact, the general tenore of my paper was not to seek for ideal solutions, but to provide a mechanism for more clearly describing current

budgetary allocations as they do in fact exist in university libraries.

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To the Editor:

The May issue of *CRL* has published a paper by L. Peep and K. Sinkevicius, titled the "Financing System of USSR University Libraries." It appears that the authors have not accurately presented certain historic facts. While listing the oldest universities of the area which is presently controlled by the Soviet Union, they mention Vilnius (1579), Moscow (1756), Tartu (1802), and Kharkov (1805).

Some readers of *CRL* might be surprised that Tartu appears in the third place and that the university's birth year is given as "1802." Historic facts seem to point to a much older date. Namely, in 1632, in Tartu, in Estonia, during the rule of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, the Academia Gustaviana was opened as an institution

of higher education. In 1690 it was renamed to become Academia Gustavo-Carolina.

During the ensuing war years and the plague the work of the Academia was disrupted. In 1710 Estonia came under the rule of czar Peter the Great who, within the terms of the peace treaty, had promised to maintain "the existing Lutheran university." Only years later, in 1802, the university was reopened as Universitas Dorpatensis. It was a German-oriented university, consistent with the wishes of the local nobility. Later, in 1896, the university became completely russified, and its name was changed to Universitas Jurjevensis.

It is hard to believe that the authors did not know the complete history of the venerable Universitas Tartuensis, as it was known during the independence of Estonia, 1919-1940. Therefore, it is very difficult to understand why the authors ignore the Swedish beginnings and prefer the Baltic-German continuation of this university.

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