

# Letters

## Directors of University Libraries

To the Editor:

Several articles have appeared recently on the careers of directors of libraries (see McAnally and Downs in *C&RL* of March 1973, Cohn in *C&RL* of March 1976, and Parsons in *Wilson Library Bulletin* of April 1976). In this connection, the statistics that follow should shed additional light on the subject of early withdrawal from administration.

Shown below are percentages relating to four groups of directors who withdrew from administration prior to age sixty-five (most universities require retirement at this age). For example, of those directors in office in 1956, 31.5 percent had in the period 1956-72 left administration prior to age sixty-five. The directors studied were those who were responsible for academic libraries within the Association of Research Libraries (ARL).

1926-42	10-20 percent
1956-72	31.5 percent
1956-63	21 percent
1968-75	26 percent

Looking first at the two shorter periods, it should be noted that the increase in the percentage of those leaving early in the period 1968-75 probably reflects the decline in fiscal support that began to be felt in 1967. Still other reasons can be adduced, but some of the more serious ones, such as computerization, were felt in the period 1956-63 as well. Furthermore, in both periods directors sometimes withdrew early for reasons having little or nothing to do with administrative tensions.

As of 1956 there were thirty-eight academic libraries in the ARL. With respect to the directors of these, by 1972 twelve of these had left administration prior to age sixty-five; another twelve were still in office in 1972; and fourteen had dropped out at age sixty-five or older. The twelve still in office in 1972 comprised a durable cohort: five had served between eighteen and twenty

years, another five between twenty-one and twenty-eight years, while two had been in office for thirty-five years. These figures relate only to the years served as director.

Even among those who left prior to age sixty-five in the period 1956-72 (it was in 1972 that McAnally was gathering his evidence), several directors had served long periods: five had been directors for fourteen to nineteen years, and three between twenty-two and twenty-five years. The remaining four were less durable, having served ten or fewer years; all four of these dropped out prior to 1967.

In the years before 1945, pressures were less intense than in the postwar years (absent were computerization, area studies, and the demands for greater productivity). Besides, the work ethic was still widely respected, and few gave serious thought to early retirement. Thus it should come as no surprise that the percentage dropping out prior to age sixty-five would be smaller than in the later period. Though the precise figure is somewhat in doubt, it is clear that no fewer than 10 percent and no more than 20 percent were involved, with the latter figure being the more probable one. To some persons 20 percent may appear to be surprisingly large for these earlier years, but the explanation seems obvious: administrative pressures are not the only clue to early departure from administration.—*Louis Kaplan, Professor Emeritus, The University of Wisconsin-Madison.*

## ARL Statistics

To the Editor:

The ARL Office is currently gathering the statistics from our member institutions for our two statistical reports,\* so some of the problems noted by Mr. Piternick (*C&RL*, Sept. 1977) are very much on our minds.

\* *ARL Salary Survey, 1976-77*, to be published in October 1977; *ARL Statistics 1976-77* to be published in December 1977.

Immediately after the publication of the *ARL Statistics 1975-76*, a statement echoing the concerns expressed by Mr. Piternick was issued from this office regarding the comments in the introduction to the published survey. These comments analyzed the ability of ARL libraries to develop their resources and services. In pointing out the problems with the analysis, we included a table that indicated the change in ARL university members since 1968-69. For those readers interested in performing additional analysis using ARL data, Table 1 below reflects changes in the ARL membership in the past eight years.

TABLE 1  
ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH LIBRARIES  
MEMBERSHIP

Year	Number of Members	Institutions Added
1968-69	76	
1969-70	76	
1970-71	78	Howard; Rice
1971-72	78	
1972-73	81	Arizona State; Calif., San Diego; Calif., Santa Barbara
1973-74	82	Brigham Young; Kent State (St. Louis dropped membership)
1974-75	88	Colorado State; Emory; Houston; South Carolina; SUNY Albany; SUNY Stony Brook
1975-76	94	Hawaii; McMaster; Miami; Queen's VPI; Western Ontario

In terms of Mr. Piternick's other comments, while we would reinforce his concerns that those using the data need to understand their limitations, at the same time we would emphasize more strongly the potential usefulness of the data for analyzing the nature and conditions of the resources of the nation's great research libraries. One need only refer to the significant study by William Baumol and Matityahu Marcus, *Economics of Academic Libraries* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1976), to appreciate the important insights that can be achieved by a thoughtful and intelligent use of statistical data such as those published by ARL.

The ARL Committee on Statistics is currently investigating other methods of gathering and analyzing ARL data, including adapting some of the statistical models used by Baumol and Marcus. We hope to issue a special report on this later this year.—*Suzanne O. Frankie, Associate Executive Director, Association of Research Libraries, Washington, D.C.*

## Response

To the Editor:

I think only a few points need be made in response to ARL's comments:

1. The "statement echoing the concerns . . ." referred to was not known to me at the time the article was written. ARL has kindly provided me with a copy—it does little more in this connection than call attention to changes in ARL membership made during the last decade and hence applies to only one of the many criticisms made by me.

2. ARL statistics do indeed constitute an important body of data and have been used, as I mentioned, in a number of significant studies among which, of course, that of Baumol and Marcus belongs. It is inevitable and desirable that they be so used, and thus that their quality be as high as is achievable. I have not advocated discontinuing the publication of *ARL Statistics*, only that they be improved.

3. What I am advocating is simply that ARL recognize and call attention to the obvious limitations in the accuracy and comparability of their data in the publication of the figures and in treatment of them in making comparisons and in drawing conclusions. In most cases this means a reduction in the number of significant figures used in the publication of data, the avoidance of rank-orders assigned on the basis of insignificant differences, and the use of more appropriate analytical methods in drawing conclusions as to institutional differences and common trends.

4. It is gratifying to learn that ARL is currently investigating alternative methods of gathering and analyzing statistical data.—*George Piternick, Professor, School of Librarianship, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.*

## The Atkinson Report

To the Editor:

I read with considerable interest Mr. De Gennaro's review of *Capital Provision for University Libraries: Report of a Working Party* [the Atkinson Report] (*C&RL*, July 1977). There has been considerable discussion about this document in Australia, primarily due to attempts by a number of university administrators to apply the conclusions of the document in the Australian environment.

I draw the attention of your readers to several articles by Mr. Harrison Bryan, university librarian, University of Sydney, on this particular report. These have appeared in the *Australian Library Journal* and in *Australian Academic and Research Libraries*. He has done a detailed analysis in relation to applying the recommendations of the report both to British libraries and to Australian libraries.

I think that it is essential that American librarians not only be aware of this report and its implications but of reasoned arguments in relation to these views. The measures involved in this document ignore many important aspects of colleges and university libraries. It is an attempt to develop standards based on student numbers ignoring the requirements for breadth of teaching and level of courses. These are essential elements in considering university library provision.—*M. Jacob, Director, User Services Division, Ohio College Library Center, Columbus, Ohio.*

## Collection Development

To the Editor:

As a fellow bibliometrician, I would like to add a few comments to Jim Baughman's article in the May 1977 issue of *C&RL* as implementation tips for collection development librarians inclined to try the techniques recommended.

Data quality control, specifically the initial choice of the bibliography used in the study, is of paramount importance. The scope of the indexing or abstracting service in terms of periodicals covered and of indexing policy determines how the literature is defined. Next, inclusion or exclusion of specific data in the analysis may affect the results. For example, Baughman select-

ed entries under 309 subject headings, that is 6 percent of the total of 4,995 subject headings, for the purpose of investigating "macro relationships." While his rationale appears sound, can it not be the case that journal articles on specific topics representing the less "productive subject" areas (operationally defined as entries under subject headings with less than eleven entries) are indeed the literature of new, often interdisciplinary fields of inquiry, which become linking agents between disciplines?

Data processing techniques to implement Goffman's indirect method (a general method, and not a technique by itself) may include clustering techniques, often available as canned programs in libraries of local computer centers. Consultation with computer scientists or computing consultants on campus may be fruitful to select a technique, which preserves the properties needed for finding relationships between data units, as recommended by Jardine.<sup>1</sup> The canned program selected may add refinements in arithmetics, a detail important from an engineering standpoint but not elaborated in Goffman's general formula for establishing communication.

In case widespread interest manifests itself among working librarians in bibliometric experiments, a formal study and discussion group within ACRL with liaison to the special interest group (SIG) on Theoretical Foundations of Information Science of the American Society for Information Science should be established. Thus we may organize to cope with a micro-problem in the interdisciplinary macro-ocean.—*Susan V. Emerson, Visiting Assistant Professor, School of Librarianship and the Library, University of Oregon.*

### REFERENCE

1. N. Jardine, "Algorithms, Methods and Models in the Simplification of Complex Data," *Computer Journal* 13:116-17 (Feb. 1970).

To the Editor:

James C. Baughman's comments on citation patterns in the May 1977 *C&RL* require some modification. What he identifies as a "serial" apparently excludes most monographic series, since the latter are rarely identified in the footnotes of scholarly journals. For example, in the articles of the

1974 issues of the *American Historical Review*, about 11 percent of the monographs cited turned out to be in either a traced or numbered series (excluding publishers' trade series). Further, if one limits one's consideration to the post-1955 monographic citations (which will account for the bulk of today's acquisitions), almost 15 percent are from a monographic series. Thus, adding monographs in series to periodicals and other identifiable serials gives a total of more than 30 percent, which is substantially larger than the 23 percent reported on page 246 of Baughman's article. The latter, however, is a more useful figure (when qualified), since a monographic series can be acquired as individual volumes.—*Joseph J. Lauer, History Librarian, SUNY at Buffalo Libraries.*

### Response

To the Editor:

It is with gratitude that I acknowledge the letters submitted by Professor Emerson and Mr. Lauer. Their comments display interest and insight.

In response to Professor Emerson's letter, I enthusiastically concur with her call for the creation of a discussion group within ACRL with liaison to the special interest group within ASIS. Currently, *Library Literature* does not list the term "collection development" as an independent subject heading. Realizing that collection development is a major problem, one that will become more acute as our body of literature increases disproportionately to fiscal abundance, the profession should engage in a more serious determined effort toward problem solution in this area. While the *ALA Handbook* does not list a collection development committee within ACRL, such a committee could serve many useful purposes, including stimulating research in the structuralist and other approaches, coordinating activities, providing leadership, and promulgating policy guidelines based upon systematic knowledge. Hopefully, ACRL will assume a leadership role in this important, emerging aspect of library management.

Professor Emerson's cautionary statement concerning general methods, and algorithms to implement these methods, should be carefully considered by investigators to in-

sure the integrity of their future studies involving clustering methods. As Dr. Emerson implies, there are constraints in any study; in this instance the *Social Sciences Index (SSI)* is the major constraint. The 309 subject headings contain 36 percent of the entries from *SSI* (Volume 1, 1974-75). The decision to use 309 subject headings was based on the notion of high frequency and low frequency; i.e., subject headings with eleven or more entries were determined to be high frequency (more productive) subject areas. The rationale for using the high frequency subject areas is based on the hypothesis that the more productive subject areas would reveal the current state of affairs in subject relationships, hence, current established interdisciplinary relationships.

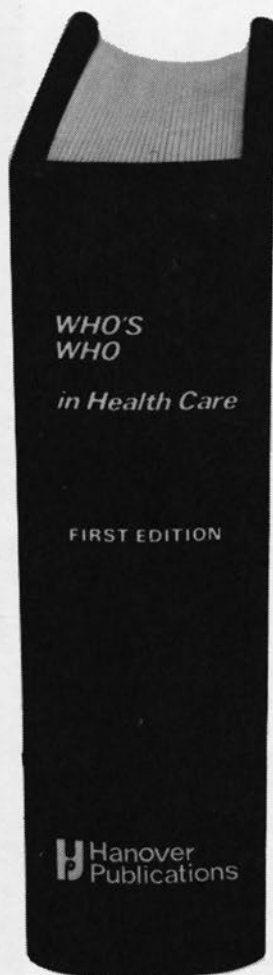
Dr. Emerson's question, asking if "the less 'productive subject' areas . . . are indeed the literature of new, often interdisciplinary fields of inquiry" and may "become linking agents between disciplines" not only represents an important problem in the *growth* of subject literatures but also suggests a relevant hypothesis that needs further investigation in the social science literature. In short, journal literature *per se* is a relevant topic for productive research.

With respect to Mr. Lauer's letter, I am grateful for his clarification of the term "serial" and heartily concur with his statement that "the latter [the 23 percent figure] . . . is a more useful figure (when qualified), since a monographic series can be acquired as individual volumes."

It is my hope that others will realize that the structuralist approach, with its orientation toward discovering underlying relationships, is a valid and important method leading to systematically based collection development.—*James C. Baughman, Associate Professor, School of Library Science, Simmons College, Boston, Massachusetts.*

*Editor's Note: The Resources Section of the Resources and Technical Services Division includes a Collection Development Committee (which has as one of its functions the development of "guidelines for the formulation of selection parameters") and two discussion groups for chief collection development officers, one for large research libraries and a second for medium-sized research libraries.*

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Harrison Bryan is Director of the University of Sydney library, Australia's oldest, largest, and most heavily used university library. He has played a leading part in the development of the profession of librarianship in Australia, and helped bring to Australian libraries the international recognition they deserve.

Gordon Greenwood has headed the Department of History at the University of Queensland since 1949. A distinguished historian with an international reputation, he is long time Chairman of the Library Committee of his university and Foundation Chairman of the Commission on Advanced Education.

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