

## Managing Our Academic Libraries: Ways and Means

*There is a new library ecology in which interdependence is the dominant force, and the establishment of new operating mechanisms (such as a national periodicals center and a national library agency) is discussed. Funds in the amounts required to meet libraries' traditional needs will not be forthcoming, and thus libraries must transform themselves and make substantial changes in their operations. There is also the need for better ways to set basic policies that determine a library's capabilities, costs, and services. In their management academic libraries have not done as well as their parent institutions in developing reliable data and in putting them to use. But while libraries need the attributes of scientific management, they must not make the mistake of thinking library management is only a science.*

**T**O BEGIN, I want to underscore the importance of this meeting and acknowledge the efforts of the many individuals who have made it possible. There are many specialties in librarianship. In recent years it has been increasingly apparent that those responsible for library performance in the context of higher education, research, and scholarship have a distinctive set of obligations and need a substantial and expanding arsenal of skills.

It is good that a way has been found to concentrate for a few days on the substance of this specific segment of our large and diffuse profession. This should be the beginning of an important new approach to expand our professional perceptions and capabilities.

For those who are interested in being part of a dynamic, demanding, purposeful, and useful enterprise, this is a good time to be a librarian in the academic and research community. To be sure, there are financial problems too large to ignore, there is the abundant and inevitable confusion that arises when neither ends nor means are un-

ambiguously defined, and there is much uncertainty about who is responsible for doing what. But despite such minor annoyances, we have, individually and collectively, an opportunity at this particular time to test our capabilities and to find our horizons.

If we are actually to do what seems to need doing, large measures of skill, energy, persistence, understanding, and luck will be essential. Success will also require effective management, about which I agreed, in October 1977, to talk here today. But a great deal has happened in the year since I committed myself, and I see the subject in a somewhat different light now.

I hope that the program planners won't be too upset if I concentrate more on the music to which academic and research librarians are likely to be dancing, instead of on the words concerning the details of the management process itself. There are admitted limits to my knowledge of dancing, so my terminology may be inexact, but to give some sense of my theme, I will be concentrating more on the "hustle" than on the "waltz."

I want to consider the backdrop against which we and our actions are likely to be silhouetted in the years immediately ahead. The importance of that backdrop is becom-

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ing more and more apparent each day, and against it both successes and failures will be magnified. The prerequisites for either a smash hit or a spectacular flop are all here.

#### THE NEW LIBRARY ECOLOGY

Traditionally, and for good reason, academic and research libraries have been considered almost personal enterprises, and operated, by and large, as self-contained organizations. Those who are responsible for their growth and maintenance and those who are their most intensive users take pride in, and are strongly protective of, what they have built and come to know. Distinctive subject collections are typically personal achievements. Reputations for service of high quality are built over time by many skillful people who realize that neglect quickly erodes performance. Exceptional library buildings are a source of institutional pride, perhaps because they are powerful reminders of aspirations as well as reflections of past achievements.

All in all, where collections, services, traditions, and support are of the highest order, there has been consistent, skillful, and intense involvement by many individuals.

#### *Interdependence*

But there is now a fundamental conflict between what some might call an idyllic view of libraries and another set of characteristics that, while always present, have in recent years become more prominent. The concept of functional independence, attractive and powerful as it is, is really inconsistent with the character of knowledge itself.

The idea of self-sufficiency implies containment, walls which curtail outward as well as inward flow. And finally, there are the hard facts of our time—rising costs that consistently outreach rising income, a persistently growing volume of publications from which we must pick and choose, and a set of new technologies that have, for one reason or another, pressed themselves on us, bringing new intellectual and fiscal challenges.

Valuable traditions, valid philosophies, and long-established methodologies are now being tested by expanding perceptions of library obligations and this new set of present-day realities.

Something has to give. The question is not whether libraries will change—that process is already under way—but rather how and to what ends that change will be controlled and guided. Can libraries as organizations expand capabilities and still be intellectually and financially viable, and can librarians build the substance of this profession and still maintain the pride of personal accomplishment in the process? This is a key question facing our profession.

It is clear, as we search for alternate ways to do traditional things, that the fact of interdependence is the dominant force in our future, interdependence not only among libraries but between libraries and the other components in the chain of scholarly and intellectual communication. The walls are down, and a new ecology is slowly developing.

Few topics in library annals can match "cooperation" for staying power as a subject for study and discussion. Unhappily, the correlation between useful results and the volume of that discussion has moved from zero upwards more slowly than one might have hoped. In part, this has been because the programs proposed were sometimes poorly thought through. Sometimes the methods chosen were not appropriate to the task. Also, librarians and library users alike have not, at all times, had the courage to act in ways that fully supported their expressed convictions.

Cooperative collection development programs have worked best in "no-conflict" areas—that is, Library A is encouraged to collect comprehensively in a given subject field by Libraries B and C because B and C have no perceptible interest in the field. Cooperative preservation projects have been much discussed, but self-preservation has understandably prevailed. Even interlibrary loan, the cornerstone and corollary of cooperative collecting, is still a cumbersome and frequently frustrating process.

But cooperation of another kind has fared better. When libraries have worked together to establish a new and clearly needed service, along with the necessary structure, the results have sometimes been spectacular. OCLC is an example, as is the National Program for Acquisitions and Cataloging, promoted by the Association of

Research Libraries and implemented at the Library of Congress.

This recent experience suggests that an approach based on providing needed services for libraries through new operating mechanisms is likely to have greater impact and stand a better chance of success than more cautious, more traditional cooperative ventures that tend to be limited in both commitments and aspirations.

#### *A National Periodicals Center*

There are several prospects for dramatic change on the horizon, one of the most promising being a national periodicals center.<sup>1</sup>

In the fall of 1977 the Library of Congress asked the Council on Library Resources to prepare a technical development plan for a United States national periodicals center. The need for such a facility was formalized by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science in its 1977 document *Effective Access to Periodical Literature*, which recommended that the Library of Congress assume responsibility for developing, managing, and operating the center. LC and the council agreed that the plan would be prepared in such a way that it could be used by the Library of Congress or any other agency prepared to assume responsibility for the creation of a major periodicals facility. Several foundations contributed to the cost of preparing the plan, which was completed in August 1978.

The goal of the national periodicals center (NPC) is to improve access to periodical literature for libraries and thus to individuals using libraries. The intent of the plan is to assure that the NPC will accomplish this goal (1) by providing an efficient, reliable, and responsive document delivery system for periodical material, (2) by working effectively with the publishing community, and (3) by helping to shape a national library system through NPC operating policies and procedures.

The specific operating objectives of the NPC follow logically from this goal. They are:

1. To provide a reliable method of access to a comprehensive collection of periodical literature.

2. To reduce the overall costs of acquiring

periodical material by interlibrary loan.

3. To reduce the time required to obtain requested material.

4. To assure that for any document delivered through the NPC, all required copyright fees and obligations will have been paid.

5. To act, under appropriate conditions, as a distribution agent for publishers.

6. To provide libraries with additional options as they establish their own collection development and maintenance policies.

7. To promote the development of local and regional resource sharing.

8. To contribute to the preservation of periodical material.

9. To provide a base for the development of new and imaginative publication strategies.

10. To provide a working example of a national access service that might be extended to other categories of materials.

These operating objectives make it clear that the national periodicals center will link in new ways the collecting and distribution functions of libraries with the distribution activities of at least some kinds of publishing.

As proposed in the plan, the national periodicals center will contain a centralized collection of periodical literature directly accessible to libraries throughout the nation. Initially projected at thirty-six thousand titles, subscriptions for which would be generated as quickly as possible, the collection would continue to grow prospectively (adding more titles) and retrospectively (acquiring back files) according to an established strategy and in as timely a fashion as possible. All subject areas would be included, with the initial exception of clinical medicine.

Eventually the collection may number in excess of sixty thousand current titles, but it will never contain all of the estimated two hundred thousand currently published. Though few titles not held by the NPC are likely to be in great demand, it is planned that the NPC would provide access to many of them through a system of referral libraries. The NPC will contract with these libraries to provide service to requesting libraries that desire specific titles not in the NPC collection. All requests

would be channeled through the NPC to assure uniformity of procedure and to provide the means to monitor system performance.

The NPC will develop and make available a finding tool to identify the titles and holdings to which the NPC can provide access. The finding tool will be organized by key titles and International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) and will include titles available from both the NPC collection and the referral system libraries. For the first several years libraries will be required to request only listed material.

The most important question for many librarians is, Which libraries will be able to go directly to the NPC? After a breaking-in period for the NPC and after the collection is well established, all libraries will have access. The decision to use the NPC or alternatives such as local, state, or regional resources should be based upon the actual dollar cost of the transaction (a system of service charges is projected) and the reliability of access or delivery.

Librarians using the NPC will be assured that, for any item received from the center, the appropriate fees will have been paid. This will relieve libraries of some of the requirements established by the CONTU (National Commission on New Technological Uses of Copyrighted Works) guidelines.

Quite apart from the procedures to comply with the copyright legislation, it is imperative in the interest of efficient scholarly communication that the NPC develop effective relationships with the publishing community. It is proposed that the NPC become a kind of service and fulfillment outlet for at least some publishers. Thus the NPC might provide a back-issue service (probably in microform), an article sales service (so long as the article remained protected by copyright), an outlet for on-demand publishing, and/or a source for the full text of material published in synoptic form.

All of these services would generate some income for publishers while providing the access to material that library users need. It is recognized that a relationship of this kind may tend to modify traditional information production and/or distribution functions. But each element of the information chain has a unique and valuable role to play in serving the needs of inquiring scholars, and

each must be supportive of the other.

I won't take time to describe internal operations other than to note that prompt and reliable response is the dominating objective. Further, the cause of long-term preservation of this major segment of literature is significantly advanced. The capital requirements for a building and the initial collection are substantial but, it is hoped, not insurmountable items. Requirements for an annual operating subsidy, the difference between costs and income, are projected at \$3 million.

The creation of a national periodicals center will require the cooperative action and support of librarians, information scientists, publishers, politicians, and foundation trustees. One thing is clear. Society has everything to gain from an improved capacity to retrieve and use the information generated by its members. A coherent national periodicals program should provide such an improvement. A national periodicals center is the first step.

#### *Bibliographic Control*

In another arena, that of bibliographic control, plans are moving ahead to carry further the already substantial progress that has been made in transforming methods and procedures. Funds for a substantial development effort have been assured by a number of foundations. With the participation and assistance of LC, NCLIS, and a substantial number of institutions and individuals directly concerned with the quality and performance of libraries, the Council on Library Resources plans to continue and even expand its efforts to promote establishment of a functionally sound and cost-effective computerized bibliographic system for libraries.

The council's role is (1) to assist in the coordination of pertinent activity now under way on many fronts, (2) to identify specific additional work that needs to be done and to see that it is accomplished, and (3) to promote development of the necessary permanent entities having the credibility, responsibility, and means to assure continuing operation of fundamental system elements.

In essence, the projected bibliographic system is envisioned as a set of coordinated

activities to establish and operate a computerized bibliographic record service and a parallel set of independent activities by individual libraries, groups of libraries, and function-oriented networks (e.g., bibliographic networks, resource-sharing networks, etc.) to develop systematically their own individual and collective capacities to use the files and products of the central service and, when appropriate, to contribute to that service.

The general objectives of the entire enterprise are focused, first, on meeting needs of individual library users and, second (but not secondarily), on the operating efficiency of libraries. Among the criteria that must be met by the projected bibliographic system is that of economic viability. The intent of those involved in this work is not to create a formal, prescriptive, and tightly structured monolithic system but rather to establish a comprehensive and reliable bibliographic base which can be put to use in appropriate ways by individuals, libraries, and library systems as they seek to meet needs that they, themselves, perceive.

The links between the library components of the bibliographic system and other components of the broader information sphere will require careful attention. Further, simply because bibliography is the keystone of the process of scholarly communication, future bibliographic system capacities will have to be sufficiently broad to accommodate any modifications of traditional publishing systems, such as more extensive use of on-demand publishing techniques; that is, the system will have to record what is potentially available, whether formally published or not.

Equally interesting is speculation about the effect that new and effective links among libraries or even groups of library users with similar missions or interests might have on the way these institutions and individuals work. There is no intent to prescribe any specific course of action in these tangential areas. Rather, the goal is to reduce constraints on making change so that imaginative and constructive future action might be made more possible.

Bibliographic structure and procedures are but part of the equation for successful library performance. Availability of the ma-

terial itself, purposeful development of local and national collections, preservation of existing resources, effective library management including mission-oriented research and analysis, and, for academic and research libraries, the productive involvement of libraries in teaching and their effective support of research and scholarship are all essential elements. But, in the final analysis, the bibliographic system is the balancing factor, and it thus justifies the time, expense, and skill that are required if the future needs of libraries and their users are to be met.

#### *Other Forces at Work*

There are many other forces at work that will affect the obligations and operation of libraries.

The American Council of Learned Societies is sponsoring the National Enquiry into Scholarly Communication, which is considering the process of scholarly communication in a systematic way by exploring the links between all parts of the system—journal publishers, university presses, libraries, abstracting and indexing services, and scholarly organizations and associations. A new Commission on the Humanities was recently established by the Rockefeller Foundation. It will inevitably touch on library matters.

The White House Conference on Libraries will consider many topics of concern to academic libraries, not the least of which is the form of future federal funding.

Major national agencies such as the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Science Foundation are rethinking the library support components of their programs. The prospects seem strong that a Department of Education will be established by the next Congress, and the placement of library programs in that restructuring is a topic worthy of attention.

For academic librarians, one important question is whether support programs for libraries of all kinds should be held together in a single unit, as is now the case, or whether there should be full or partial distribution of such programs to major educational divisions, such as the one focused on postsecondary education.

The prospect of a periodicals center and

the possible subsequent development of national collections of other categories of material, the probable characteristics of an integrated nationwide computerized bibliographic system, the persistent and still unresolved problem of establishing a national strategy and developing realistic tactics to address the chronic problem of preservation of the nation's resources for research, all raise the same questions: Who is going to assume the responsibility for turning plans into action? Where does the operating and funding responsibility rest?

### *A National Library Agency*

Something we do not now have is clearly needed. There seems to be slowly growing the recognition that some kind of an operating agency is essential if those relatively few, but absolutely necessary, library service programs that are logically nationwide in character are to be established and become functional on a permanent basis.

Federal support at a reasonable level, programmatically targeted, seems essential. But there are hazards that must be avoided. Joseph A. Califano, Jr., secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, has warned against undue dependence by our schools on the federal government, and I suspect the warning could be extended to libraries.

Califano asserts, ". . . we must be vigilant against the threat of federal domination," and goes on to say, "If I have seen anything made plain in the last year and a half, it is that when programs and dollars multiply, bureaucracies and regulations multiply also; paperwork and reporting requirements multiply; the temptation to interfere, however well meaning, grows. And thus the danger grows that the job we are trying to do with our programs will ironically be made even more difficult—by the unwieldy requirements and burdensome procedures these programs bring." He concluded his remarks with the words: "So I would ask you to be vigilant and vocal—as individuals and as a strong national force—to fight for federal dollars, but against federal domination. You must not leave the battle for your independence to be fought by others; you must fight it yourself. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

The discussion about the appropriate form for an operating agency—one that would

have a sufficiently broad operating mandate and would still maintain the independence from government, per se, that our library and information system seems to require—is just now assuming national proportions.

The NCLIS/University of Pittsburgh conference held [November 6–8, 1978] addressed the question of governance as a preliminary to the White House Conference deliberations. Equally important is the initiative taken by several organizations and individuals to move ahead quickly with the national periodicals center.

In the last two weeks, both ARL and the executive committee of the Association of American Universities have endorsed a "Statement of Principles for Congressional Action to Establish a National Library Agency." That statement reads in part:

#### FINDINGS

1. Research and education in all disciplines depend upon libraries to collect, organize, and preserve the information of potential use to the scholars of the world.

2. Although libraries have been growing at exponential rates in recent decades, because of the rapid growth in cost and volume of publications, each library is becoming increasingly less able to satisfy the research and educational needs of its patrons. This experience is documented in studies of interlibrary loan and of access to the periodical literature which have been sponsored by several professional and scholarly organizations including the Association of Research Libraries, and by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.

3. The solution to this problem requires the establishment of an operating library agency at the national level.

#### PURPOSE

A National Periodicals Center (NPC) would be the first operating program of a national library agency. However, the NPC is inseparably linked to the nation's bibliographic structure, the evolving library communications network, and the complex processes of resource development and preservation. The purposes of a national library agency need therefore to include the following:

— To coordinate bibliographic control for the significant scholarly and research literature of the world so that library patrons, scholars, and research personnel are not restricted in their work only to publications in their own libraries;

— To facilitate the development, dissemination, and acceptance of national and international

standards for bibliographic description and communications and networking;

— To assure access, through lending or reproduction consistent with applicable laws, to published information of all kinds and formats which are needed by scholars but which their libraries are unable to acquire or retain;

— To assure a program for the preservation of published information through conservation techniques and maintenance of depositories for infrequently used materials in order that the accumulated experience, knowledge, and literature of the past will not be lost but remain available to our own and future generations as a base for continued progress.

#### ESTABLISHMENT

In order to fulfill these purposes an independent national library agency will be established with the appropriate authority, responsibility, and funding. The first operating responsibility of such an agency will be a national periodicals center.

#### GOVERNANCE

A national library agency should be governed by a body with the responsibility and authority to establish, fund, coordinate, operate, or contract for the programs and services required to carry out the purposes of the agency, to determine operating policies and evaluate and review management performance.

Irrespective of form of organization, the governing body should be designed and its membership selected with care and with the same sensitivity to the subject of government presence which has shaped the character of the National Science Foundation and the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities. Persons nominated should be drawn from the ranks of scholars, scientists, university trustees and officers, head librarians, and public figures with demonstrated broad intellectual interests. In making his nominations the president is requested to give due consideration to recommendations for nomination that may be submitted to him by the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Library Association, the Association of American Universities, the Association of Research Libraries, the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, and other organizations concerned with education, research, and libraries.

A national library agency should not have prescriptive authority over the activities of the nation's libraries. Such agency should be limited to organizing and directing national services to augment local capabilities and cooperative efforts in order to permit these to operate more effectively and efficiently.

This present intense level of activity on the national scene is, as many of you know at first hand, often matched on state and local levels. Even internationally, the pace of change is brisk. The challenge for the profession, individually and collectively, is to be in control rather than to be controlled. College and university librarians need to find more effective ways to be heard. They also need to demonstrate that they are willing and able to rethink their ways and means, in the context of the new library ecology.

It is with this concern in mind that CLR, the ARL Office of Management Studies, and the leadership of ACRL moved to establish the new Academic Library Program. The intent of this effort is to train a large number of librarians to serve as specialist consultants to academic libraries, including two- and four-year liberal arts colleges and universities. These individuals, using specially prepared materials will, after training, be available to libraries which are willing and ready to assess their own performance and methods in the context of a changing environment.

The intent, over time, is to develop a strong corps of trained consultants who are also experts in special fields, including instructional programs, management methods, collection development, and computer applications. The premise on which the program is based is that more trained manpower is essential if our three thousand academic libraries are to be assisted in responding wisely to change.

#### THE MONEY PROBLEM

A recently distributed NCLIS brochure<sup>3</sup> draws on data included in the commission's *National Inventory of Library Needs*, which was first published in 1975. The document asserts that the present level of \$2.4 billion in annual expenditures for libraries of all kinds must be increased by an additional \$6.3 billion to achieve minimum levels of service. The great portion of this awesome increase is for public school library media centers. For academic libraries alone, it is asserted that an additional \$621 million is required to supplement the current \$1-billion expenditure level, a 60-percent increase.

According to the report, an additional ten thousand professional librarians are needed in the three thousand college and university libraries; the stock of library materials should be increased by 158 million items over the present 612 million total, which works out to an average of fifty-three thousand additional items per academic library.

The commission is currently having papers prepared to identify and assess possible funding strategies for consideration in late 1979 by participants in the White House Conference.

These are big numbers. In at least some instances, one can wonder how carefully they were developed and how tightly drawn were the underlying assumptions. But even if the needs established can be readily defended, the present level of public enthusiasm for tax increases and more public spending doesn't generate much optimism.

There is no doubt that most academic libraries are hard pressed financially. Many operate under marginal conditions, having known the recent decade of educational affluence more as a rumor than as a fact. Many other libraries, probably the majority, are faced with a slow erosion of briefly glimpsed distinction. Inflation-driven book and journal prices, salary scales that are often a matter of professional embarrassment, the high cost of technology, and new obligations assumed in the belief that an initially soft money base would somehow harden, are all issues that are more pressing each fiscal year.

The hard truth is that, despite the validity of the library case, the funds required to continue to meet traditional needs in traditional ways are unlikely to be forthcoming in anywhere near needed amounts.

How are libraries accepting the gradually tightening belt? In some cases the approach is to maintain a myth of business as usual, which in fact means erosion in salaries and collections and a subtle deterioration of overall library performance. Others will face up to the problem by cutting hours, consciously reducing acquisitions in specific areas, and hedging on the quality of binding. But such actions simply defer the day of reckoning, and this is clear to those that are responsible for providing the funds.

There is an already strong and rapidly growing conviction that is increasingly evident in meetings of university presidents that libraries, individually as well as collectively, must be fundamentally transformed if they are to meet their current and future obligations with the necessary distinction at an acceptable cost.

Those who are concerned are not naive. They see the problem as a complex and difficult one, one that will not be solved overnight. They realize that each library must be strong enough to carry its own weight in primary areas of responsibility, and the best of them see libraries as active, essential elements in the processes of teaching and learning.

They also see substantial expenditures for material of marginal importance, they see redundancy in bibliographic activities, and they see development of collections in new subject areas that go beyond institutional aspirations. Most important, they are less and less persuaded by the obvious logic in the library case for more funds because they are more and more aware of the fiscal realities with which they live.

The pressure is mounting for a major transformation that will require a new understanding of libraries both by librarians and their users. Each library will have to define with much precision the scope of local resources and the extent of local services, especially technical services. Libraries will have to view periodical centers and other possible national resources as integral and inseparable parts of themselves, not as remote appendages. Those who will be planning cataloging and other bibliographic services at regional or national levels must be pressed hard by all librarians to ensure that newly developed services will result in a substantial reduction or even the elimination of local costs wherever possible. There must be an unstinting insistence that the application of computers to processing in fact cuts costs, rather than redistributes them.

All academic libraries and especially academic research libraries are already embarked on a period of unprecedented change. Financial prospects make this inevitable. The form that change will take is still uncertain. One hopes it will be deter-



mined in substantial part by fiscally aware librarians who are concerned first and foremost with educational performance and not by fiscally responsible officers who might not be fully aware of library obligations.

An unanswered problem lurks behind all of this. Making change, especially substantial change, costs money. Retraining staff, reorganization of existing space, and purchase of new equipment all carry new costs, as does payment of service charges for an increased number of interlibrary loans, for data base searches, and for communications. Additional one-time funds and the capacity to redeploy already budgeted funds along more broadly defined functional lines are essential.

Librarians are faced with financially motivated pressures to make substantial changes in their operations which in turn require these new expenditures and a greater fiscal burden. How to budget for transition could well be the real dilemma at the heart of the money problem.

#### POLICY FORMATION

The process of setting policy has received some attention in libraries in recent years, but it is my contention that, by and large, the changes that have occurred have not gone far enough or, in at least some cases, even in the right direction.

When I use the word *policy*, I am referring only to what might be called fundamental or primary policies, those that govern the character and growth of a library's collection; those that govern retention practices; even those that relate to cataloging codes.

I would also include policies that determine the physical condition of collections; those that establish the patterns of staff composition; those that set the quality and scope of library service; and those that establish the degree of dependence or interdependence of a library on other libraries or on externally provided services—in short, the policies that determine library capabilities, library costs, and library character.

I am not concerned with what might be called secondary policies (loan codes, for example) that are designed to explicate pri-

mary policies. I am even less concerned with the process of administration, or policy execution, important as that is.

I want only to consider the process of setting primary policy, and I do so for several reasons. Clearly, these policies determine current and future library costs. Equally important, they determine the quality of library performance, in effect the value of the library to its parent institution. Given the centrality of these policies, it follows that the process of setting them deserves attention.

To be specific and direct, there are signs that something is wrong. Primary policies are too important to be set by library administrators or even by all librarians acting in isolation. We have not always recognized this fact; and even when we have, we have not normally done as well as we might in finding a better way. All librarians, not only library administrators, have the inescapable obligation to take part in stating the issues that underlie each policy question, accurately and perceptively, for their own library and for their own institution.

Just as there are no pat answers, there are no pat questions. Once the question is asked, consideration and response should involve not only librarians but also faculty, college and university administrative officers, trustees, and, when useful, students. We seem to have trouble with this process.

Key questions are sometimes not raised purposefully, policy issues are often addressed in a crisis context, issues are often poorly or incompletely stated, and the involvement of the necessary parties is more often than not in the form of ineffective faculty committees, senate library committees, poorly used visiting committees, easily diverted school and departmental committees, and budget meetings where the real objective is not policy formulation but rather cost containment.

Libraries are often more isolated, and possibly more insulated, than they should be from the heart of academic administrative activity. Ways must be found to air key topics routinely and thoroughly by all who should be concerned. This may be heresy in the minds of those who find comfort in a low profile, but I might go so far as to

suggest establishing a "library cabinet" to consider only these primary issues. Individuals from all essentially concerned components would be included and would have their say.

Purposeful exploration and decision on key topics would in the end provide librarians with a new level of confidence in their actions and would help build an informed and probably more supportive constituency. Policies would be better understood, program and funding would perhaps become more clearly related, and the prospects for long-range planning would be improved.

There is no halfway point in this approach. It requires professional skills of the highest order, it requires some sublimation of personal ego, and it requires a great deal of work. But the nature of college and university libraries is such that the wisdom of many is required to build a proper foundation for action. Each librarian needs to take the time now to assess the process of policy formulation and to take action if all is not as it should be. I see this as a matter of great importance.

#### MANAGING LIBRARIES—WAYS AND MEANS

I will turn finally to my assigned topic. True to form, there will be no organized treatment. Rather, I have a few observations, possibly unrelated, and I offer them with the simple objective of promoting the idea that the process of library management is a means to an end, and not an end in itself.

The study of management as a discrete discipline is something that has developed in our lifetime (at least my lifetime) and has really flourished only since World War II. Scientific management, or, more specifically, the development and use of a wide range of analytical techniques to improve managerial behavior and performance, has dominated business and industry and, more recently, has been extensively employed in the public service sector as well, including colleges and universities.

Personnel compensation plans, space utilization schemes, strategies to reduce fuel consumption, income projection, and other phases of institutional management have been closely examined for the purpose of improving procedures. Comprehensive

planning models have been developed at a number of universities (Princeton and Stanford are examples) and are used, not to make decisions, but to assess the financial impact of alternative courses of action.

Libraries, in general, have not done as well as their parent institutions in developing reliable data or in putting what little we do know to use. Not enough is known (and we have problems accepting what we know) about almost everything we do.

For example, who really uses the more obscure components of a bibliographic record? Does availability of a sophisticated, comprehensive bibliographic record system generate additional demand for material? How much? What prompts individuals to buy books and journals rather than borrow them? What factors most heavily influence library budget decisions in universities and colleges?

The list of basic questions is long and the answers are of great importance, especially as work proceeds at the national level on many of the major undertakings on the agenda we all have before us.

For example, I wish we had an imaginatively constructed economic model of the bibliographic structure of the country available for use now as we begin to assess alternative approaches to building standardized data bases. Substantially better data and more credible analytical techniques than we have are badly needed.

Even more important is the wisdom to interpret the data collected. For example, a recent report from a liberal arts college indicated that about two-thirds of the titles recommended in *Books for College Libraries II* and included in the library collection were apparently not used during 1976-77. What does this information mean? Does it say something about the student body? About the teaching methods of the faculty? About *Books for College Libraries*? About the performance of the library itself? I don't really know. The point is that gathering information for use in managing enterprises such as ours doesn't automatically point the way toward the solution of a problem. That, in the end, is up to people, not systems.

A few days ago a friend who was properly concerned about the questionable effectiveness of my own indecisive and vague man-

agement style sent me (for my private and personal use) a photocopy of an article published in the *Harvard Business Review* entitled "Zen and the Art of Management."<sup>4</sup>

The author, Richard Pascale, reflects on the differences between Japanese and American decision-making processes and finds much similarity in methods and results. Two differences, however, are evident:

1. Three times as much communication was initiated at lower levels of management in the Japanese companies, then percolated upwards.

2. While management of Japanese companies rated the quality of their decision making the same as did their American counterparts, they perceived the quality of *implementation* of those decisions to be better.

At the heart of the difference between the two styles of management are the manner in which issues are raised and the acceptance of ambiguity as a part of the management process. There are, in the view of the author, "certain situations (where) ambiguity may serve better than absolute clarity." There are many topics where the issue is more complicated than the bare facts, especially, the author notes, those issues where human feelings are aroused.

The substance of our professional effort is of tremendous importance, because we are really trying to improve the way recorded information and the products of intellectual creativity are put to use by individuals. This is an awesome responsibility, and there are many reasonable points of view as to how this should best be done. Within every library, many actions and decisions affect in-

dividuals in many different ways. In such situations, progress toward established policy objectives requires tentative approaches and the facility to adjust direction as new evidence develops.

In assessing the Japanese style, the author finds ambiguity a useful concept in dealing with others and with "legitimizing the loose rein that a manager permits in certain organizational situations where agreement needs time to evolve or where further insight is needed before conclusive action is taken."

In short, we need the techniques and information that scientific management provides, but our responsibility and the nature of our assignment are such that absolute answers are, almost by definition, suspect. We need the attributes of scientific management, but let us not make the mistake of thinking that library management is only a science.

#### REFERENCES

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