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The Changing Role of the Academic Librarian: Drift and Mastery

There are elements of both stability and change in the academic environment. Hence, although the traditional functions of the library will persist, librarians are increasingly confronted with opportunities and requirements for the improvement of library services. Their success depends on librarians' ability to escape a working pattern of routine and reaction and to master the professional role. Crucial to this mastery are an awareness of the library's dynamic environment, the exercise of individual initiative, and the willingness to engage in critical analysis and evaluation of the performance of the library and the profession.

MORE THAN SIXTY YEARS ago Walter Lippmann entitled one of his works *Drift and Mastery: An Attempt to Diagnose the Current Unrest*. "Drift and mastery" is a theme that suggests a constantly recurring set of options. We have a choice. We can drift with environmental changes or we can try to master them, and occasionally succeed. As a profession, our development and effectiveness have ebbed and flowed through the years. Broadly speaking, we are now working in an era of extraordinary opportunity to shape the flow and utilization of information and ideas and to play our roles in the academic enterprise more effectively than ever before.

As we have sought over the years to exercise our full potential as academic librarians, our professional leaders have often clearly articulated the issues of librarianship and higher education—and sometimes even the means for resolving these issues. One of the most difficult professional challenges has been to escape the drift of routine and reaction and to raise our level of performance to match more precisely the historical aspirations of academic librarianship. In this effort to gain mastery of our particular role in academe, we have manifested a variety of stages which might be labeled: groping, coping, and hoping.

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In this paper I shall try to identify and project the main elements of the role of the academic librarian and the professional abilities embedded in it. Several of our professional forebears and contemporaries will be cited to illustrate the constancy of the principles of academic librarianship and our primary mission.

GROPING: THE ISSUES

In this decade it seems to be incumbent on all writers and speakers in librarianship and in higher education to demonstrate that they understand—or can at least identify—the principal issues before getting to the point of the paper. Nevertheless, were the history of issue identification not a key to my contentions in this paper, I would be tempted to utilize the technique of Steven Muller, who in a recent paper, "A New American University?" states in his last footnote: "I am conscious of having avoided almost the whole of the current agenda of problems confronting higher education. . . ." and then explains why he has done so. He completes the footnote by listing a dozen or so broadly encompassing problems, so that you know that he knows them, ending with the classic weasel words: " . . . and a host of others."[1]

A particularly comprehensive statement of issues for libraries in higher education appeared in an article published by *College & Research Libraries* in 1973. It is the widely

cited piece by McAnally and Downs, "The Changing Role of Directors of University Libraries."[2] In trying to account for the recent instability of directorships, the authors surveyed a number of librarians who had recently experienced changes of position and through them identified some all too familiar critical issues.

Among background factors they list the following: growth of enrollment, changes in institutional presidency, proliferation of university management positions, changes in the world of learning and research, the information explosion, hard times and inflation, changes in planning and budgeting processes, technological disappointments, changing theories of management, unionization, increasing control by state boards, and no national system for information. Their explication of the last issue is well worth reviewing in light of the positive steps toward resolution of some national issues now being undertaken.

In the few years since publication of this article other specters have loomed on our changing horizons, such as the increasing demands for accountability from a variety of agencies, declining enrollments, stabilized or declining budgets in the face of continuing increases in costs, and the ill-understood effects of initiatives like California's Proposition 13.

To continue the depressing litany, among the internal problems cited by McAnally and Downs are the following: greatly intensified pressures from various sources; the declining ability of the library to meet needs; lack of goals and planning; inability to accommodate to educational changes quickly; decline of the status of the director and hence of the library; and prevalence of traditional authoritarian styles of management.

In a somewhat lighter tone with similar effect, David Kaser has recently written:

> The revolution of 1969–1970, at least as it affected libraries, was aggravated by perhaps only one atypical characteristic—only one factor that was different from those of previous revolutions. This was the frustration of unrealized expectations—expectations that had for the most part been unrealistic in the first place. It is difficult today to reconstruct the total sense of unbridled optimism that permeated the "Great Society" days of the early and mid-1960s. Somehow we had come to believe that we held all the aces, that we knew what society needed, that we knew how to deliver it, and that we had the resources to get the job done. As regards libraries, the press and public expected them to purvey extended services through instant computerization. University presidents expected them to cut costs. Faculty expected them to deliver everything they needed. Students expected them to stay open all night. Staff expected that work should never be dull and that salaries should rise 10 percent per year.[3]

In yet another cut at problem definition, a colleague produced the following:

> There is a law affecting the growth of libraries not unlike that of geometric progression. By the principle of *noblesse oblige*, a library which has attained a certain size is called upon to grow much faster than when it was smaller. Each year's additions result in a good many books which are but beginnings of series to be indefinitely continued; or the enlargement of the scope of the library by the purchase of books in some departments hitherto neglected makes it necessary to cover the increased ground every year thereafter. Not long ago the trustees of the Astor Library (now the NYPL) complained that they could hardly use any of their large income for the purchase of really new books, on account of the demands for continuation of series already commenced. So with Harvard University Library, where it is reported that over $7,000 is required annually for subscriptions to serials and for other standing charges entered against the income as liabilities to be met before a dollar can be appropriated for new books. As our numerous libraries grow, this tendency to demand largely increasing funds and to require larger and still larger buildings gives serious occasion to pause and look the matter over to see what can be done by way of relief.

This gem, mined by Edward Holley, appeared in 1894 in a book by William I. Fletcher. Holley further reports that " . . . Fletcher suggested that library cooperation between libraries in one locality might be a partial remedy."[4]

This remembrance of things past and present pertains not only to issues. We can also trace the history of exhortations.

Once again Edward Holley located reminders that there is little new under the sun. More than 102 years ago, Otis Hall Robinson stated the following:

> A librarian should be much more than a keeper of books; he should be an educator . . . the relation . . . ought especially to be established between a college librarian and the student readers. No such librarian is fit for his place unless he holds himself to some degree responsible for the library education of

his students. . . . Somehow I reproach myself if a student gets to the end of his course without learning how to use the library. All that is taught in college amounts to very little; but if we can send students out self-reliant in their investigations, we have accomplished very much.[5]

There follows a more recent quotation from Justin Winsor, published only 100 years ago:

A collection of good books, with a soul to it in the shape of a good librarian, becomes a vitalized power among the impulses by which the world goes on to improvement. . . . the object of books is to be read—read much and often. . . . At the average college it is thought that if anybody gets any good from the library, perhaps it is a few professors; and if anybody gets any amusement, perhaps it is a few students, from the smooth worn volumes of Sterne and Fielding. What it is to investigate, a student rarely knows; what are the allurements of research, a student is rarely taught.[6]

The foregoing exhortations to librarians to fulfill their proper role laid the groundwork for the struggle to achieve recognition of that role with the conferral of some variety of academic status. An instructive, and occasionally discouraging, review of this struggle was provided by Robert Downs in his ALA Centennial article "The Role of the Academic Librarian, 1876–1976."[7] Downs reports that H. A. Sawtelle proclaimed in 1878 that the college librarian ought to work closely with the students and provide guidance in the development of literary taste. Sawtelle ". . . concluded that such college librarianship as he described ought not to be annexed to a professorship, but be itself a professorship."[8]

As documented by Downs and others, this search for role and status—for the academic librarian's particular mission as differentiated from other academic actors, including the so-called teaching faculty and the educational technologists, and from other library workers—has occupied librarians for over a century. The search often seems as plaguing today. No issue better exemplifies our groping than this one. To some extent, we have been so concerned with defining our status that we have lost sight of the purpose of the effort. Surely the single most compelling reason for seeking and maintaining academic status for librarians is not to gain a reward or to establish a symbol, but rather to provide an organizational tool to stimulate and facilitate the efforts of librarians to make their activities directly relevant to the dynamic educational process.

The groping occasioned by role confusion has not been limited to the faculty status quest. As librarians, we have sometimes neglected, overlooked, or relegated to secondary importance the roles of other persons, particularly library assistants under whatever label, without whom librarians, libraries, and our clientele would be unable to function. For too long, too many library assistants have had good reason to ask why they should do the same work as librarians for different status and different pay. This issue will be noted again in the discussion of the specific elements of the role of the librarian. Other issues with which we grope are those of participative management, whatever that means, and the sometimes related issue of collective bargaining.

These issues have intensified in an era of burgeoning organizations, new campuses, spectacular institutional growth, and, however sudden, confrontation with dismal fiscal realities. These issues will not be discussed here in detail because most of them appear to be profoundly affected by two factors that make it impossible to generalize adequately in so short a presentation.

First, the environment in which one deals with an issue like faculty status or collective bargaining has such influence on the options and the choice among them that attempts at generalization are frequently misleading. As one reviews the debates on these issues, it is apparent that two diametrically opposed viewpoints may be equally valid when each is assessed within the particular context from which it has arisen. The elements of status that are feasible for the Virginia community college librarian are different from those appropriate to the University of California librarian and different again from the elements meaningful at an Illinois state college. Recognition of these differences is, of course, what led the drafters of our standards and model statement on faculty status to relate the elements of a given librarian's status to parallel elements for the faculty in the same institution.

The second consideration is that many of these issues of role confusion can be clarified by individual initiative, confidence, and the will to assume a more professional attitude with concomitant effect on performance.

Environment and *initiative* are the key words.

Coping: The Efforts to Respond

In spite of the rapidly increasing complexity of the environments in which we function, many of our contemporaries have demonstrated well the ability to identify the salient forces and trends—scholarly, technical, political, economic, demographic, and social—with which we must deal. On the national level, there are numerous well-edited and widely distributed journals through which professional intelligence is communicated. The divisions of the American Library Association and other professional associations and cooperating agencies have sponsored a number of regional workshops across this country on topics of current urgency.

Several efforts, aimed at improving the ability of an individual library to cope with its changing conditions, have been mounted in the last ten years. These include the institutional efforts at Michigan, Cornell, and Columbia, and, stemming from the latter experience, the work of the Office of Management Studies of the Association of Research Libraries.

Through the Management Review and Analysis Program (MRAP), the Academic Library Development Program (ALDP), the Collections Analysis Project (CAP), the publications, and the workshops, many of which are drawn together in the new Academic Library Program (ALP), libraries are being provided with an impressive array of tools for coping. Moreover, with a bit of perspective on the efforts of this program, one can perceive that one of the effects is the upgrading of the ability in libraries to anticipate, cope with, and even effect change. But this is in anticipation of the third section of this paper—what we are hoping will be manifest in the changing performance of the academic librarian.

On the other hand, coping all too often signifies something far different from the thrill of victory. It signifies pain, alienation, reversion, or defeat. Pain has come through cutting and closing—cutting budgets and staff, closing libraries. Many who are here have shared these experiences. Even more colleagues, not present here, have done so.

To demonstrate the loss of staff within a limited group of libraries I tracked the changes in staff size and mix in the eighty-eight university libraries that were members of the Association of Research Libraries in 1974–75, and these are shown in table 1.

The total FTE employed in these eighty-eight libraries declined by forty-nine during this two-year period. You will note that the overall reduction in regularly appointed staff is masked by the increase in student FTE. These intriguing data deserve a far more careful and complex analysis than can be provided here. It will suffice to say for the moment that they reveal some thoughtful administrative coping and provide stimulus for reflection on the core activities of academic librarianship.

The preceding were raw and generalized figures. In part, they reflect the fiscal condition of the research university library. While inadequacy of resources is hardly a novel phenomenon in research-oriented universities, austerity is a condition that has been understood and endured by the private-sector undergraduate colleges for many years. It may now be visited on our community college colleagues.

Two environmental agents are at work. The first is the declining birthrate, which has caused academic institutions on all levels to scramble for enrollments. A crucially important corollary factor is the potential effect of initiatives like California's Proposition 13. The effect of Proposition 13 may well be to undermine the ability of California's community colleges to provide education at a nominal, or even significantly lower, price than can be provided by other educational institutions within the state.

TABLE 1

Changes in Staff Size in Eighty-Eight ARL Libraries

Category of Staff	Year 1974/1975	1976/1977	Difference
Professional staff	6,946	6,826	−120
Nonprofessional staff	13,920	13,851	−69
Student staff	5,188	5,328	+140
Total staff	26,054	26,005	−49

Perhaps more profound in impact is the likely shift of policy control from the local to the state level. Should this phenomenon spread and the community college become a state-supported or pay-as-you-go enterprise, this segment of higher education will be forced to cope with its mission in new ways and may be forced to rethink its assumption of general education responsibilities. The implications for libraries in turn are profound.

Economic pressure can lead to alienation. The potential for alienation lies between types of libraries, between librarians and the others in the academic community, between librarians and other employees within the library. It is critical that we be aware of this threat and move to cope with it by rethinking our common, as well as our distinct, missions and roles.

One of the most disturbing of all symptoms of coping is the tendency of a segment of our profession to opt for a reversion of status. C. James Schmidt has described how well academic librarians have succeeded in recent years in gaining more appropriate recognition of our role in higher education even in the face of declining resources. He observed that the proportion of librarians with faculty status increased from 50 percent of the academic librarians to 75 percent in the years between 1966 and 1975.[9]

However, without naming names or places — too many of you can probably supply details—there are now those among us who would opt to denounce academic status and criteria and to revert to that passive, strictly hierarchical, form of review that is solely dependent on a supervisor's evaluation of how well assigned tasks are performed.

Should this reaction prevail, it would be a terrible blow to the quality of academic librarianship. Performance reviews under conditions of academic status entail review of professional growth and contribution that may be manifest in many ways, including professional activity, research, and writing. This activity extends beyond "doing the job good," the invariable essential element of acceptable job performance. As an academic, the librarian is expected to perform his or her work in terms of the future, as well as the past, to seek ways to further the state of the art of the profession, as well as his or her own job. In my experience, the performance expectations associated with academic status have extended our performance and have moved the profession toward a higher standard of excellence. We do not want this quest for high standards to be diminished.

It is also essential that we monitor ourselves to avoid reacting to crises in a fashion that is constraining for us all. In several of these United States, I have witnessed the debilitating effects of anxious administrators responding to declining resources or the need for action by seeking to exercise ever greater control and more homogenization of practice. No level of administration is exempt from this tendency—national leaders, federal and state departments of finance and educational commissions, boards of trustees, central university administrations on statewide or local levels, library administrators, department heads, supervisors.

Some such managing is essential, if novel. In an address last year a University of California official stated that ". . . Too many people in the academic sphere felt the idea of managing a University was almost an insult. They are used to the idea that a University does not get managed; it just sort of happens."[10] In the same tone this speaker had stated earlier: ". . . an increasing proportion of our resources has to be taken up with institutional defense—we have to try harder to stay more or less in the same place."[11]

The danger, of course, is that we lose sight of the fact that to stay in the same place is to lose ground in a changing world. We must fight for opportunities to exercise individual initiative and innovation, the marks of professional endeavor and part of the very essence of the scholarly enterprise.

Hoping: The View Ahead

To succeed at a level beyond coping requires clear objectives, an understanding of our environment, and personal initiative. We need to establish our direction and what we seek to accomplish. We need to implement mechanisms to enable us to remain aware of both stable and changing forces in our environment. We need to exercise the initiative required not only to respond to change, but also to effect change. The fundamental mission of the academic library will not change substantially within the foreseeable future. It is the means for moving toward our goals that are

marked by rapid change, change which has been amply described at this conference and elsewhere in recent months.

The mission of the academic library, which largely shapes the role of the academic librarian, is to contribute to the goals of the college or university of which it is a part and to the wider scholarly community. Those goals pertain to teaching, learning, research, and public service in some combination. The enduring, traditional, and widely accepted function of the academic library is to provide bibliographical and physical access to the books and other information resources required to support the diverse missions of our various academic and research institutions. Adoption of other functions, including those of direct provision of information and of instruction in the use of libraries, has proved far more controversial within our profession and is deserving of more profound consideration and debate than has typically been generated in recent years.

Robert Hayes expressed a conservative viewpoint in a delightful paper presented in the Chemist's Club Library Seminar in 1974, rephrasing the historical question: "Is the role of the library—and thus of the librarian and of the catalog, as the principal tool of the librarian—to provide access to the books in the library or to the content of those books?" In this paper, Hayes credits Panizzi, librarian of the British Museum in the mid-nineteenth century, with arguing for a form of catalog that led to the decision that ". . . the crucial function served by libraries is to provide access to the books, and that decision set the tone for libraries ever since." Hayes goes on to note

> . . . the fact that if a record is not preserved and if access to it is not available, it is impossible to provide access to the content. If the book or journal is not available, nothing in it is available (unless it has been transferred to some other record, which simply changes the record to be preserved, not the fundamental issue). This elemental fact has implications of overwhelming importance, because it establishes the role of the library *vis-à-vis* other institutions; it determines the ways in which the library allocates its resources; it establishes the context within which the librarian's role is identified; it predetermines what the content, form, and organization of library records will be.[12]

Certainly, the provision of bibliographical and physical access to the intellectual record is an essential and exciting pursuit, one in which librarians have been engaged with distinction for years, and one in which the challenges are as great today as they ever were. It is a task that takes brains, courage, imagination, and energy. Furthermore, it can be argued that it is the ideal complementary role to be played *vis-à-vis* our clientele in an academic setting. It is the students and scholars who are learning, mastering, and utilizing the techniques of intellectual discrimination.

A different point of view on the provision of information has been presented by a number of academic librarians, notably Samuel Rothstein and Anita Schiller. Like many of you, I first encountered in library school Rothstein's 1960 paper "Reference Service: The New Dimension in Librarianship," with its memorable distinctions among minimum, middling, and maximum theories of reference service. You will remember that he characterizes the maximum theory as one that leads to the direct provision of needed information, not simply information about information, such as where and how to find it. Rothstein recognizes the practical difficulties of introducing such service on a broad scale, but concludes:

> I would remind you that practical solutions are always a secondary matter; what comes first is conviction. If we can achieve a clear cut decision on direction and policy, if we can settle on ends, I have no doubt that we can find some of the means.[13]

Anita Schiller joined the fray with a brilliant analysis of conflicting values, goals, and attendant rationalizations within the profession. Published in *Library Quarterly* in 1965, her article "Reference Service: Instruction or Information" provided a clear delineation of the functions of the reference librarian in pursuit of the library's goals.[14]

Schiller's particular focus is on the antagonistic relationship between the minimum and maximum philosophies of service. The antagonism is frequently suppressed or overlooked. This failure to confront the issue directly has contributed to the library user's confusion in that he or she does not know what to expect of the librarian. In the application of the minimum philosophy, library users are expected to learn how to help themselves in extracting information from the library's resources. Instructional services are intended to facilitate this pro-

cess. Schiller contends, however, that the maximum view, with the goal of providing comprehensive and accurate information, leads to a more direct, and hence more effective, type of service.

The choice we make, personally, institutionally, and professionally, is certain to have far-reaching effects on the librarian's role and environment. Failure to understand or deal with the issue is likely to leave us in the middle, or the muddle—groping again.

Such groping would seem to be decreasing as a sign of the times. The librarian today has opportunities to function at a level of professionalism higher than ever before possible. These opportunities influence in extraordinary ways the work of the librarian as well as recruitment and education, the governance of libraries, and our leadership patterns.

Inadequate fulfillment of the academic librarian's potential role has been widely observed. In 1970 Eldred Smith described this underutilization of professional capacities:

> The . . . functions that librarians perform are, more often than not, so circumscribed by regulation and routine, so lacking in autonomy, individual judgment, and expertness, as to qualify far more as bureaucratic rather than professional activity. There is little professional about an acquisition librarian who spends his time on bibliographical verification or even on the routine review of a national bibliography or blanket order shipment; there is little professional about a cataloger who rather automatically applies the principles of the Library of Congress or Dewey to a given number of books each day—usually trying to maintain an acceptable volume of productivity—without real knowledge of the field in which he is cataloging or of the needs of the library's clientele and how they use the catalog; there is little professional in a reference librarian who answers routine and substantive questions with equal indifference to and lack of knowledge of the questioner and his library needs. Such librarians are guided primarily by institutional routines, regulations, and values. Their relations to their clientele are, at best, indirect or fragmentary. Their involvement with any subject or area of the collection is incidental and usually through the medium of book trade lists or cataloging rules.[15]

The current climate of austerity and retrenchment, a climate we expect to prevail for the foreseeable future, has provided us with an opportunity both to seriously reexamine the functions of various types of staff within the library and to take action on the basis of that reexamination.

As indicated earlier, in many academic libraries staff size has declined, at least relative to the work load. Furthermore, there has been a major shift in proportions, marked by the use of greater numbers of student staff, especially for those tasks characterized by minimum training and maximum routine. That is the result of necessary steps taken by many library administrators across the continent.

An accompanying trend in academic libraries in the last several years has been the increase in use of clerical and paraprofessional staff in supervisory positions and in a variety of complex library activities. In this respect, as in many others, the larger libraries lag behind the community college and college libraries. Examples abound. High-grade library assistants are frequently found managing circulation departments. In some branch libraries, senior library assistants bear the title of branch manager, thus freeing the professional staff in those branches from the tasks of recruitment, training, and operational supervision of nonprofessional staff. Preorder search sections are often staffed entirely by library assistants. Each of you could add to this list of tasks, once thought to be primary professional responsibilities.

In many such conversions thousands of dollars are being saved in individual library budgets. Moreover, in many instances the tasks are being performed more effectively. One can speculate on the reasons for better performance by library assistants. Certainly, their quality of performance is related to the extensive experience in operations and supervision which library assistants bring to their management positions. Where previously there had often been an inexperienced, freshly minted holder of an M.L.S. or a frustrated old-timer, supervision was less likely to be effective. Librarians have, or should have, different expectations for themselves from the handling of these kinds of responsibilities.

As noted earlier, another way in which libraries have been increasing production or handling greater work loads with fewer dollars is through development of greater reliance on student staffing. In many instances almost all circulation and stack maintenance functions are handled by students. Students are also widely used for routine technical processing and searching operations, special projects of all descriptions, and not infrequently, they

have worked their way into the reference team while shelving in the reference stacks on a busy day.

Libraries have produced many more staff hours for the dollar wherever such ways can be found to shift functions, dollars, and attitudes in that direction. Certainly the prospect of increasing work loads with stable or decreasing staff resources makes managers and librarians on all levels at least more openminded to the possibilities.

What is the outcome? If the operation and supervision of the library are turned over to students, clerks, paraprofessionals, and some other nonlibrarian specialists, where does that leave the displaced librarian? Out on the streets, if you believe that these activities are the core of librarianship. In a position with unprecedented promise, if you believe that making library collections and services dynamically responsive to user needs is the core activity of librarianship. Librarians are being freed for essential interaction with the library's clientele.

Of course, many librarians have functioned in this way for decades. What seems to be new is a climate that encourages and requires the majority of academic librarians to perform in this fashion. At the heart of the effort is the necessity to understand, respond to, and influence faculty and students; other users; educational administrators; the producers and vendors of library materials, services, and equipment; legislators; and our own professional leaders.

For effective performance it is necessary that librarians be aware of the changes such as those that have been described during this conference and that have invigorated our professional literature in the past couple of years. These are: (1) changes in higher education; (2) variations in management and governance; (3) changes in scholarly communication; (4) changes in technology; (5) changes in patterns and effectiveness of cooperation; (6) changes in disciplinary and individual scholarly interest; and (7) changes in the ways services and resources are provided.

These changes constitute a massive stimulus to the professional body. To maintain a sufficient level of awareness and interaction the librarian must not be ensnarled in circulation transactions. Also necessary in many libraries is a deliberate orchestration of professional activity to ensure an effective harmony among diverse individual interests and organizational needs.

The individual librarian must work toward acquiring simultaneously more specialized knowledge and more versatility. This paradox can best be resolved if we recognize that our education must be built on a foundation of principles and not be limited to current techniques. The choice is, as Steven Muller has put it, between higher education and higher skilling.[16]

What, then, are the principal functions of the academic librarian today and in the foreseeable future? They are the planning, provision, and evaluation of service designed to meet the needs of the particular clientele group that is primary to the given academic library.

This responsibility entails developing collections that as a whole respond to the needs of the local scholars and designing or adopting flexible and efficient alternatives for bibliographic access to those and other collections. It also requires an ability to reexamine the library's priorities and operations critically, to develop means to evaluate the effect of those services, and to be aware of new alternatives that will enable the library to deliver those services more effectively.

Beyond that, it requires the librarian to help students and faculty members find ways in their learning, teaching, or research that can take better advantage of the services, including direct and indirect provision of information, that the library has to offer. It is also the librarian's responsibility to interpret clientele needs to vendors and producers in order to ensure timely delivery of satisfactory products.

Earlier, I indicated two keys to my remarks —environmental awareness and initiative. I shall now offer a third—critical analysis and evaluation of our efforts. Just as we have passed the point in libraries where we can afford to compensate for individual poor performance by hiring a second person to do the job without removing the first, so too I think the time has come to examine some sacred cows and calves.

For example, library instruction is currently a flourishing activity. As an early practitioner in its most recent revival, I am well aware of the positive impact and the personal satisfac-

tion for teacher and learner that such activities provide. I am also well aware of the immense amount of time required to prepare and teach well, especially to teach in traditional classroom settings through traditional credit courses.

We must rigorously reevaluate that mode and other types of instruction in which we so wholeheartedly engage, to ask whether the typical payoff—a minority of students deeply instructed in the use of libraries in their present form—is indeed the most appropriate or productive use of anyone's time. Does library instruction provide the student with tools for lifelong learning in this era of changing information needs and means for satisfying those needs? How much such instruction is provided in order to help library users compensate for limitations in the library's operations and services? Finally, remember Schiller's suggestion: Is instruction based on a philosophy that ultimately shortchanges the clientele? These remarks constitute not a negative judgment of library instructional activities but a plea for thoughtful analysis and criticism of their effectiveness for the users.

Other sacred cows that have come dangerously close to consuming the entire pasture include the seemingly endless debates over issues of status and governance. I confess that I have been a hyperactive participant in these activities as well. But the librarian I foresee dominating the scene in the years to come is turned on more by the analysis of user need than reflection on the professional navel. Such librarians are influencing decisions in academic libraries everywhere through sheer depth of special knowledge.

What is the source of such librarians? The question of recruitment is very much intertwined with that of the education of librarians. To the extent that we are unable to educate librarians through our professional education programs with the rigor, breadth, or depth required, we must seek compensating influences in their other educational experiences.

I would argue that graduate education in a subject discipline is a highly desirable, if not necessary, qualification for an academic librarian. Some of the best and brightest among us do not have such a qualification, but they would be better for it. To experience a library as a subject-oriented scholar does is quite different from the way that a librarian experiences it. Even as a graduate student, one senses a rigor, a multiplicity of values, an environment of stress and demand, a narrowness of focus, from which many of us in libraries are insulated. Furthermore, for many librarians, subject knowledge establishes a basis for rapport with their clientele for which even the most pleasant personality or extensive case-study exposure is not an adequate substitute.

William Moffett and Rush Miller have written within the last six years in *College & Research Libraries* about our opportunities to upgrade the profession through the attraction of subject Ph.D.'s.[17] Although we have responded to a limited extent, libraries and library schools alike are still insufficiently aggressive in this regard and in raiding other types of graduate programs on other levels.

It is, of course, perennially fashionable to ascribe our professional inadequacies to failures in our library schools. I would prefer to stress the elements of professional education that might lead to a strengthening of the qualifications of the individuals I hire and on whom the quality of library service depends. What is required is hardly news. As Lester Asheim has phrased it:

> . . . the problem of educating for the future is not essentially different from the problem that has faced educators in the past: how to establish the proper mix, the theoretical and practical—the why and the how—so as to turn out practitioners who will be flexible; who can evaluate practice and introduce needed change; who are hospitable to new approaches but sensitive to the values in tradition; who are capable of gathering, organizing, and interpreting pertinent data on which to base innovation, but who can also make responsible decisions when the hard data are not available.[18]

This is neither the time nor the place to describe the ideal curricular content of our professional education, except to urge that principles and theory be emphasized over the application of current techniques. Indeed, a variety of skills must be taught, but not necessarily those involved in pursuing great masses of reference questions or cataloging particular books. Rather, we urgently need the skills required for intelligently analyzing our environment; for conducting research, including the manipulation of numerical data; for interpreting various clientele needs; for applying new technology; and for interacting effectively with other members of the team that provides academic library service. Finally, a deep ap-

preciation for the importance of understanding the environment in which we operate is required.

The missions of various types of higher educational and research institutions must be understood. An appreciation of the sociology, politics, and economics of higher education is invaluable. It is far easier to teach the elements of cataloging a book into a particular collection on the job than to teach these more fundamental and enduring concepts and attitudes.

Even with this kind of educational base, a librarian's needs for continual updating are intense. Fortunately, opportunities abound. There are numerous workshops and stimulating articles in the librarian's professional literature and that of higher education and organizational behavior. Hence, one might question the effort that is being invested in trying to build comprehensive, formal structures in librarianship for this purpose. The primary unfilled need is for the kind of intensive midcareer educational update from other segments of the knowledge industry, such as that suggested by Wyatt in his earlier paper. Otherwise, with some personal initiative, and sometimes a little extra mutual tolerance and support by colleagues, most of us have more opportunities to learn and to grow professionally than we can possibly handle.

All of this opportunity, all of this change, all of this challenge has resulted in very complex organizations. One of the consequences is that some form of shared leadership and governance is inevitable, simply because it is impossible for one, or a very few individuals, to comprehend it all. Particular leadership styles are so affected by the individuals involved, by the academic environmental traditions, and by the situation that generalizations are very risky. However, I will venture one prediction: As librarians become ever more expert in identifying and analyzing change and in establishing relationships within either the consumer or the vendor community, those librarians will inevitably have greater voice in the determination of the policies of any given library.

What is described here is a climate that facilitates increasingly widespread peer influence and leadership. However, in order to be fully effective, all participants will need the courage to make tough judgments—to evaluate their own and each other's accomplishments and potential in terms of the library's mission—and the needs of students, scholars, researchers.

Also required is an individual commitment to the notion that our profession does play a critical role in higher education and that the quality of our performance and contribution to this enterprise is our greatest concern. We cannot leave our future, or even our rapidly changing present, to a few articulate and powerful professional leaders—our stars, if you will.

It remains the responsibility of individual librarians to monitor the probable consequences of the decisions that are being made today and to provide the vital linkage and feedback that will enable those who plan big also to plan right.

The choice between drift and mastery for the person and the profession, dear colleagues, is not in our stars, but in ourselves.

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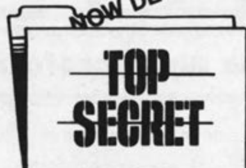

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