



Inside Washington

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In order to frame social policy, we need facts, not generalities. We also need practical responses to immediate problems. Yet rarely do educators have the information we need to make sound policy. Sometimes we suspect that they withhold information we are entitled to.

—Samuel Halperin, "Politicians and Educators: Two World Views (The Politicians' View)," *Phi Delta Kappan*, November 1974.

It would be nice to think that somewhere in the Washington Office files there was a folder containing the complete program for the future of academic libraries. We certainly wouldn't be withholding this information from Dr. Halperin's politicians.

Unfortunately, there seem to be several folders full of academic library futures, none of them labeled complete, and, from the looks of the mail, some other people are having the same problem with their own files.

Meanwhile, the Higher Education Act of 1965 is up for renewal this year, and Congress is beginning to take a look at federal support for higher education, spawned in the post-Sputnik heyday and subsequently fallen from the charmed circle. Senator Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.) has said he will urge the Senate to support a simple extension of the existing law while his subcommittee on education evaluates the law's effectiveness. Rep. James O'Hara (D-Mich.) has already introduced two bills in the House to change the student aid part of the present law and has said his special subcommittee on education will tackle "the rest" sometime this fall.

With this in mind, what are librarians doing?

During Midwinter in Chicago, the ACRL Legislation Committee worked over the library programs in the Higher Education Act and came up with two proposed changes.

First, the committee suggested that the \$5,000 basic grants for library resources—which the administration calls "drips and drabs of federal money" and which the university librarians have suggested are hardly worth the effort of applying for (but they do apply all the same)—be limited to institutions with materials budgets not exceeding a certain amount.

Second, the committee proposed the act be expanded to provide federal funds on a per-capita basis (like the Higher Education Facil-

ities grants based on student populations) for institutions to develop resource-sharing programs at the local, regional, and state levels.

The purpose of these suggestions was to limit the institutions eligible for basic grants to small and needy institutions while providing something more substantial for the large universities to work for. The two programs might be made mutually exclusive. If you qualified for one, you wouldn't get the other.

Meanwhile a committee of librarians within the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges has suggested that too much money is being allocated to the basic grants and not enough devoted to planned collection development on a regional basis. With this in mind, the Land Grant Committee proposed the association press for changes in the law that would limit eligibility for basic grants to institutions having materials budgets "below some established figure which should be derived from an analysis of USOE HEGIS statistics and data from the past years of basic grants."

It is also proposed that money left over after these (presumably fewer) basic grants were satisfied be used for special-purpose grants "to be allocated to states or multi-state regions on a per-capita or other formula basis for administration and award, through /state/ 1202 commissions or OE regional offices." This suggestion isn't likely to be greeted with much enthusiasm by private institutions, however.

So some people at least are beginning to think in terms of practical responses to this immediate problem of the expiring Higher Education Act.

But what about that information the politicians think we are withholding? On the floor of the House the member who has the most facts at his disposal wins the point. "Mr. Chairman," comes the query from some hostile Congressman, "I would simply like to ask the sponsors of this bill why the libraries in academic institutions need this kind of special assistance? We are already spending millions of federal dollars on aid to higher education and I for one. . . ."

It would be mighty nice to know what effect federal funds have had on academic libraries and why librarians feel these funds should be continued—or not.

In recent years librarians have been less than happy about the declining sums available under Title II of the Higher Education Act. Basic grants which were supposed to be \$5,000 have been prorated down to \$4,235. There has been nothing available for supplemental or special

purpose grants since 1972. Lack of money begets lack of enthusiasm, and lack of enthusiasm begets even less money the next year.

Does anybody care about continuing these programs?

This spring the Washington Office did a little unscientific sampling of its own. We were making a case for appropriations, not looking for absolute truth. The questions wouldn't have pleased a library school professor and the sample would have blown a statistician's fuse. But the answers were interesting.

Out of thirty institutions solicited, sixteen replied. Half of these were two-year or junior colleges, half were four-year colleges and universities. Eleven were public, and five were private.

From this group it seemed that something genuinely different is afoot in the academic library business. The average college/university had added sixty-six new courses since 1970 and is now making five interdisciplinary degree programs available. Thirteen institutions had continuing or career education programs and eleven had open admissions policies. All but one of the libraries served users outside the normal academic clientele.

On the fiscal side, the average overall college/university budget had increased 50 percent since 1970, while total library budgets had increased only 34 percent and the library's acquisitions budget had increased only 29 percent.

Federal money, in the form of Higher Education Act basic grants of \$4,235, made up 10 percent of the acquisitions budget of the average academic library in our sample.

Every librarian who replied said the federal money was important to the library's budget and, interestingly, everyone suggested the program be continued on the lawbooks just as they are written now. Half the librarians also said the provision in the law requiring the library to maintain the previous year's spending level in order to qualify for a grant helped at budget time.

Of course, many of these replies may have been colored by the way the questions were asked. But the fact remains that sixteen out of thirty librarians were willing to go on record as supporters of the Title II-A program as it now stands.

In addition, it seems evident that colleges and universities are in a period of dramatic change and that libraries may more than ever need some kind of outside support and protection if they are not to be buffeted and driven off course by the winds assailing academic institutions today. Libraries are a long-term investment on the part of society. Perhaps they should be sheltered from the more radical shifts of the times. Perhaps this is the federal role.

The ACRL Legislation Committee has begun to establish an academic library legislation network, laying the ground for the day when Messrs. O'Hara and Pell call for comments from librarians on the future of academic libraries.

Meanwhile, the Washington Office continues to push for more funding under the existing law. After all, money is money. As Rep. Carl Perkins, chairman of the House Committee on Education, told a group of Kentucky librarians in April:

"Spokesmen have complained before our committee that the law requires them, as they put it, 'to hand out \$5,000 grants to every college library that applies, regardless of need.' Well, I just don't happen to know of any college librarian—regardless of the size of his institution—who can't put an extra \$5,000 to mighty good use." ■■

In response to demand, the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries will offer a placement service during the ALA preconference to be held in San Francisco, June 25-28, 1975.

Librarians who wish to be listed for the placement service and who will be available for interviews at the preconference should request forms from Ms. Ann Bowden, Box 2287, Austin, TX 78767. There is no deadline for registering for the placement service, but forms returned prior to the first day of the preconference will be assured full consideration by employers throughout the meeting.

ACRL Reception at San Francisco

A reception for all members of the Association of College and Research Libraries will be held during the 1975 Annual Conference in San Francisco.

Hosted jointly by the General Library of the University of California (Berkeley), the Alumni Association of the University of California Library School, and the Association of College and Research Libraries, the reception will be held on Wednesday, July 2, 5:00-7:00 p.m., in the Morrison Room of the Main Library at Berkeley.

Wine and cheese will be served at the reception, at which new members of ACRL will be honored.