

Academic In Deed

A director of libraries in a large university whose librarians have academic faculty status with explicit titles naming various levels of professorship describes what responsibilities he feels are his toward the library faculty, and conversely what is expected academically of them.

AFTER "FULL ACADEMIC STATUS" for a professional library staff has been achieved, then what? The author does not mean any quasi-form of academic status such as "with the rank of," or "Librarian III, equivalent to Assistant Professor," but rather the whole package, for example: "Life Science Librarian: Associate Professor of Library Science" with a budget line listing the position in some such code as 5112, meaning Associate Professor, Instructional Staff, twelve months appointment.

All this designates a position to be filled by an individual who is wholly academic, not quasi-academic and/or quasi-administrative (and/or—God forbid—quasi-clerical or technical). It implies tenure, with the rigid ladder of time and specific qualifications required for achievement of that status. It implies sabbaticals and the relinquishment of a professional's duties to other librarians, while he or she—for six months or a year—is off on some demonstrably significant scholarly activity, and the key word here is "demonstrably." It means writing proposals for funds, follow-up scrambling for grants, publishing results, accepting committee work for state or

national associations, and participating in the round of standard internal academic endeavors. Above all it means being interested in the actual education of his institution's students.

Nobody who knows academic librarians as well as this author has any doubt of their ability to carry on all these academic activities, and to do so in a way to equal and probably out-perform most of the faculties in the academic departments of their institution. The ability is one thing; the readiness, the provisions, the arrangements, the flexibilities, both personal and intra-departmental, may well be something else.

In some respects a director of libraries does act like a dean or department head, depending on how large or small his professional staff is. In personnel matters (and most of this discussion will concern what may be called such) he recruits, evaluates performance, proposes salary increases, and decides on the rare dismissals. In general these are always done with intensive but informal senior staff consultations, and with prior discussions and also informal approvals arranged with his own vice-president or president. His activities in such matters differ from those of the usual dean's or department head's principally in that they are generally spread over a wider range of clerical and service-type staff

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than such fellow academicians. If these latter have more than a few secretaries, some technicians, and a limited number of other such assistants working for them, these are unusual cases. The overwhelming majority of their staffs are faculty people. The present-day library director's domain may include over 50 percent nonacademic staff and this proportion may increase to as much as 75 percent in the near future. One result may be a library director's tendency to feel more strongly about the needs and importance of his clerical and service staffs than do deans or academic department heads about theirs, which could tend to dilute somewhat the fanaticism a proper academic head should feel for his faculty. It is the author's observation that the successful dean or department head is one who pampers his faculty, rides roughshod over institutional procedures on their behalf, and in general sees their achievements as the justification of his work. Academic library directors have dabbled at this institutional ramrodding, but in the main, "doing their thing" seems to mean library buildings or growth of library collections. If librarians as faculty members are to match their peers in other departments, what will library directors need to do?

The answer is not singular: a number of things, some pleasant, some difficult, will have to be done. One of the prime responsibilities will have to do with recruitment and retention of staff. This divides at least into two types of problems. One will be with young professional library school graduates. As these neophytes join a staff with full academic status they will have to understand that their stay might be short. If they plan to go on for the doctorate, it will almost surely be short. If they do not plan to go on for the doctorate, it will mean a five-year period of work and then a ceiling to promotion. The AAUP rules require the granting of tenure after seven years in a position. Few institutions want any

large number of tenured individuals at instructor level on their faculty, and so an individual faculty member ineligible for promotion to assistant professor, which usually requires the doctorate or considerable progress toward it, must be advised in writing at the end of five years that he will not be granted tenure. This seems rather hard-boiled. Most younger librarians do not in their early performance clearly give evidence as to what area in the field brings out their best quality, they are not generally eligible for institutional subsidy to pursue higher education (if indeed their director believes any such education is desirable), nor are the young persons always in library positions from which they can be spared easily from a service point of view. Young librarians usually believe, of course, that job mobility is a good thing, but neither they nor most library directors want to force mobility on them. Forced mobility, by whatever name called, will be an almost certain consequence of accepting total faculty status. The reason for all this is that in most institutions, faculty promotions are reviewed and in fact decided by an overall campus-wide faculty committee who will expect the librarian candidates for promotion to match the faculty-type achievements of candidates from other departments. So a director of libraries faces the problem of living with such constraints on his control of personnel.

Besides dealing with newly recruited staff, an academic library director will have on his conscience his current staff, who will be in various transitional stages of readiness or unreadiness for faculty status, and in whose interests he must plan and act. Even if "only graduates of accredited library schools" are on the staff, some of these may just have professional degrees of the fifth-year bachelor grade. Such degrees do have considerable prestige among the library professionals but are not necessarily impressive to presidents, vice-presidents,

and faculty committees on promotions. And even the current fifth-year master's degree carries only modest weight with such people.

For those of the staff under thirty-five a director has his work cut out. He must give them guidance, counsel, and a channel for acquiring advanced academic work. For the senior staff, professional activities such as securing and carrying out grant programs, consulting, publishing articles, holding association offices, and teaching in library schools are what a director should seek for senior staff whose promotions he must "sell" to his institution. When a grant opportunity arises, shall a director "hog" it for himself, share it, or divert it to a librarian colleague? One of the latter two must be his choice, if he is serious about faculty growth. When a national, regional, or state nominating committee chairman calls him, should he say "yes" for himself or try to push a capable person on the staff? Should he publish with footnote acknowledgements to his staff or should he list co-authors? Should he consult alone, or as a team with one of his assistants? All of these questions would seem to call for the second alternative, if the library director is to be a faculty colleague among an able *professorial* staff, rather than a "boss."

In his relations with the president of his institution, the president's office group, the other department heads and the professoriate generally, the director must with conviction and even to the point of being humorless, emphasize and continually explain the distinctive, intellectual, and specifically educative aspects of library work. The "image" is far from what it should be and a lot of hard work will be required to improve it. Of course the "bumbling professor" and the "mad scientist" are not exactly complimentary pictures either, and have had to be faced down, even in academe. So no countenance should be allowed about the "old maids" in the li-

brary, about the "stuffy library staff," or about "sub-sub-librarians." The director should himself respect the staff and use every device of personal example, public relations, and academic etiquette with the institutional community to elevate the regard for the professors on the library staff.

Every faculty perquisite should be pushed. When there is eligibility for sabbaticals, a librarian staff member's way to take one should be "greased." If foreign travel is partially subsidized, an appeal for a librarian's attendance at an international congress should be strongly advocated. Every opportunity should be seized by a director to see that his own people fully enjoy whatever faculty benefits are available.

And the director must not act as he should just to seem to "help" his colleagues on the library faculty. His consulting with them on decisions must be "for real," not *pro forma*. He cannot avoid ultimate responsibility, but he must share the development of programs and the excitement of any power and achievement accessible to his position.

These then are some of the attitudes and actions incumbent upon a library director on behalf of a fully recognized librarian faculty. It goes without saying that some directors already have created this environment. But are they as universal and expected in academic library directors' performances as they are in those of other deans?

What corresponding attitudes and actions will have to mark the behavior of a library's professorial staff, if academic status is to be a success? First and foremost there will have to be an active concern for the educational environment available to all levels of students. This will have to be more marked, specific, and involved than is now sometimes felt and practiced by college librarians. An understanding and participation must be achieved in curriculum development

efforts, and in what students are doing during their day-to-day studying and use of library materials. Catalogers and order librarians will have to come to share more directly in these educational concerns, and so will librarians in circulation and general services. Probably departmental librarians in universities already experience a good deal of this educational involvement and will find in it nothing new.

Considerable tact and the development of communication practices and etiquettes are called for in barging into the college or university academic program. This does not mean it should not or cannot be done. In most schools certain departments, notably the English and mathematics faculties, often are subject to considerable pressure to teach special courses to satisfy particular needs of the journalism or engineering faculties. There are channels through which these pressures can be exerted and still retain general institutional peace. The library professors will have to apply and accept pressures in order to see that the maximum educational potential of the media we serve is realized. This will mean more originality, more imagination, more scholarship, and more aggressiveness than are presently displayed by most professionals. It will also mean libraries will have to be changed; some of our pet systems may have to be jettisoned; and libraries will be more expensive inevitably, and not just because of buildings and materials. The tough campaigns to win needed funds will have to be fought not just by library directors alone as is now often the case, but also by library professors, fully supported by library directors. Unquestionably any education, maturity, and character we librarians may bring to an academic institution will find full scope. And the reason for this is not just changes needed for librarians; the reason is the greater individualism of future academic learning. The stu-

dent of the future will not be the scrounger for course credits, which term describes too many of today's registrants. He will demand of librarians both services and guidances which today are only rarely offered or available. And he will get them.

The library professors, with the scholarship and authority which are needed today, will be mandated tomorrow. We present practitioners must ask for full and unequivocal status for such professors or we will never be able to recruit the quality of people required. Just one hundred years ago, we lost Daniel Coit Gilman, who was librarian of Yale during the 1860s. Why? Because he got fed up with stoking that library's stove. He went on to the presidency of the University of California and subsequently founded graduate education in the USA as president of Johns Hopkins. We will never attract the future Gilmans to develop rightly our library science, or when we do, we will not keep them, if we subject them to second-rate academic status. There should be no compromise; we should never settle for "with the rank of" or for "Librarian Grade I" or VI or higher. Twenty-five years in the academic world has taught me that lesson. If you do, then some young and new business manager does not understand, and a librarian rated as Librarian III does not get a travel grant reserved for professors. Or a new president comes into office and appoints a campus-wide committee for some key purpose and forgets to name any librarian member. The oversights, the "pin-pricks" brought on by any quasi-status are pointlessly but cruelly demeaning; they sour able people; they make present librarians only halfhearted recruiters of new professionals; or, as in the past, they drive able librarians out of the profession. I urge full academic rankings by title based on qualifications and performances which merit them, as the correct and only finally satisfactory goal. ■■