

RONALD F. DOW

## Academic Librarians: A Survey of Benefits and Responsibilities

*This article summarizes a survey of 166 librarian positions in forty-one colleges and universities which offer faculty status to librarians. The survey records the various benefits received by librarians as well as their responsibilities in campus governance.*

AS PART OF A PLAN OF ACTION to acquire faculty status for the librarians at Hamilton and Kirkland Colleges, Clinton, New York, the local chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) designed and conducted a survey. The chapter reasoned that the most effective means of presenting the case for librarians to other faculty and administrators on campus would be to reinforce each position concerning a faculty right or responsibility with evidence for the stance in the form of data gathered from institutions claiming faculty status for librarians.

A questionnaire was designed and mailed to fifty-three libraries across the country. The libraries chosen for the survey were libraries which had advertised faculty status for librarians at their institutions, either in job advertisements or in articles which had appeared in various professional journals since the 1940s. When a state system was queried, only one library in that system was approached; thus, in reality, the survey results represented many more libraries than would appear to be the case.

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*Ronald F. Dow is branch reference librarian, Feldberg Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.*

One questionnaire only was sent to a library, and in general the response was prepared by either the head librarian or an assistant. A return rate of 77.4 percent represented nineteen state colleges and universities, eighteen private colleges, and four private universities.

The questionnaire was arranged to solicit responses by position within the library. From the forty-one responding institutions, information was collected for 166 positions labelled head librarian, associate librarian, assistant librarian, department head, or other professional title. Only one response per position per library was used.

The local AAUP chapter had developed a list of rights and responsibilities that faculty members believed existed for them but did not exist for the librarians at the two colleges. The survey then was to determine if the concept "faculty status" for librarians did indeed reflect the sentiment of the 1972 "Joint Statement" issued by the American Association of University Professors and the Association of College and Research Libraries. The statement reads in part that "faculty status entails for librarians the same rights and responsibilities as for other members of the faculty."<sup>1</sup>

If indeed this were the case, the chapter reasoned, the survey results would

support the "Joint Statement's" position of faculty status for librarians. The survey was not intended to affix the percentage of schools which offer faculty status to their librarians.

#### BENEFITS

A look at the survey results and what had been labelled by the local AAUP chapter as the benefits of faculty status is provided in Table 1. Although such benefits as tenure and academic rank do exist for a majority of the librarians at the surveyed institutions, only 3.6 percent of the surveyed positions are staffed by librarians who possess nine-month contracts. It is evident from this table that not all benefits are available across-the-board to librarians with faculty status. (The survey was not concerned with such benefits as holidays or evening and weekend work. These were considered to be administrative matters rather than ones of status.)

TABLE 1  
BENEFITS OF FACULTY STATUS FOR 166  
POSITIONS AT FORTY-ONE INSTITUTIONS

Benefit	Positions with the Benefit	
	Number	Percent (n = 166)
Can offer courses for academic credit	127	76.5
Are eligible for tenure	104	62.7
Are reimbursed for attendance at professional meetings	166	100.0
Are eligible for paid leaves	154	92.8
Have nine-month contracts	6	3.6
Possess academic or equivalent ranks	103	62.0
Are eligible for school research funds	161	96.9

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

The AAUP chapter was also interested in the librarians' exercise of responsibility in the overall governance of the academic community. This takes the form of voting rights in the faculty forum and eligibility for service on faculty committees. In this instance the results were more interesting when

viewed in terms of staff positions.

As Table 2 indicates, no position guarantees basic faculty governance responsibilities, although there is a general trend supporting the point of view that the higher the position in the library administration, the more likely there is the opportunity to participate in campus governance.

Further, we may conclude from Tables 1 and 2 that, in the case of the surveyed libraries, librarians with faculty status are more likely to enjoy the benefits of the "teaching" faculty than the "teaching" faculty's responsibility for campus governance.

#### BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A cross-tabulation was employed to view the relationships of responsibility for faculty governance with benefits received by librarians. It was shown that librarians who have the opportunity to exercise greater governance responsibility also receive a greater percentage of the benefits associated with the "teaching" faculty's status. Tables 3 through 5 present these results.

For instance, as is illustrated by Table 3, 83.3 percent of the total assistant librarian positions surveyed possessed academic rank or its equivalent. But among assistant librarian positions where the governance responsibility was inherent, 94.8 percent of the positions carried

TABLE 2  
RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY STATUS

Position	Possesses Governance Responsibility (Faculty Voting Rights and Committee Eligibility)	
	Number	Percent
Head Librarian (n = 40)	35	87.5
Associate Librarian (n = 23)	18	78.3
Assistant Librarian (n = 24)	18	75.0
Department Head (n = 38)	30	78.9
Other Professional (n = 41)	28	68.3

TABLE 3  
ACADEMIC RANK AND ITS RELATION  
TO GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITY  
(FACULTY VOTING RIGHTS  
AND COMMITTEE ELIGIBILITY)

Position	Positions with Academic Rank Total of Surveyed Positions		Positions with Governance Responsibilities	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Head Librarian	32	80	30	85.7
Associate Librarian	15	65.2	14	77.3
Assistant Librarian	20	83.3	17	94.8
Department Head	33	86.8	26	86.6
Other Professional	27	65.9	24	85.7

TABLE 4  
TENURE AND ITS RELATION  
TO GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITY  
(FACULTY VOTING RIGHTS  
AND COMMITTEE ELIGIBILITY)

Position	Positions with Tenure Total of Surveyed Positions		Positions with Governance Responsibilities	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Head Librarian	25	62.5	24	68.6
Associate Librarian	13	56.5	12	66.7
Assistant Librarian	18	75.0	16	89.5
Department Head	24	63.2	25	83.3
Other Professional	24	58.5	23	82.1

TABLE 5  
THE NINE-MONTH CONTRACT AND ITS  
RELATION TO GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITY  
(FACULTY VOTING RIGHTS  
AND COMMITTEE ELIGIBILITY)

Position	Position with Nine-Month Contract Total of Surveyed Positions		Positions with Governance Responsibilities	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Head Librarian	2	5	2	5.7
Associate Librarian	0	0	0	0
Assistant Librarian	0	0	0	0
Department Head	2	5.3	2	6.6
Other Professional	2	4.9	2	7.1

rank. Likewise, from Table 4, we can see that although 75 percent of the assistant librarians with faculty status are eligible for tenure, 89.5 percent of the assistant librarians with governance responsibility associated with their faculty status qualify for tenure consideration.

As is shown in Table 3, we can see there continues to be a downward trend

by position for librarians with academic rank; however, librarians with voting rights and committee responsibilities appear much closer to equality with the "teaching" faculty.

The case was true as well for paid leaves, academic rank, and most of the other benefits identified by the local AAUP chapter. Even the nine-month contract for librarians, illustrated in Table 5, seems related to this gauge of librarian responsibility outside the library.

It is interesting to observe that, in the case of both tenure and rank, the assistant librarian is more likely to enjoy these benefits than is either the head or the associate librarian. This phenomenon probably results from senior library administrators in large universities holding administrative rather than faculty ranks.

As commentary on this study and the picture it paints of librarians, it would seem fair to conclude that even those who fill the highest positions in the surveyed libraries cannot, as a group, claim the same status on the faculty as those faculty who appear regularly in the classroom. Though some institutions do provide their librarians with the total range of faculty rights and responsibilities, this simply is not the case for the majority of the surveyed librarians.

One positive point can be made, however, and that is that as librarians become more active in the academic community, working with faculty in setting the academic tone of the institution through participation in college and university governance, they do achieve a status more comparable to the status enjoyed by the "teaching" faculty.

#### REFERENCE

1. "Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians," *College & Research Libraries News* 33:209-10 (Sept. 1972).