

## Faculty Status in the City College Libraries

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FOR SOME YEARS there has been a distinct trend in college libraries toward the reclassification of professionally trained librarians as members of the faculty or instructional staff of the institution. This trend has grown as the training and educational responsibilities of the librarians have become recognized and appreciated by college administrators. Furthermore, college librarians themselves are taking a much broader view of the role they should play on the campus. They are leaving more and more of their desk duties to be performed by clerks while they, the trained librarians, enter the classroom to instruct the students not only in the use of the library, but also in such subjects as bibliography and research.

This policy of reclassification has been continued by the Board of Higher Education of New York which governs the municipal colleges, namely, City College, Hunter College, Brooklyn College, and Queens College. Three years ago the board began the revision of all by-laws affecting the tenure and organization of the teaching as well as the administrative staffs of these colleges. These revisions were found necessary in order to modernize, simplify, and facilitate the functioning of the various collegiate departments. The changes which the board has made

so far have considerably altered and improved the status of the college librarians, transferring them from a clerical to an instructional title. The history of this change may be of interest and value to other college librarians who wish to see a similar reclassification in their institutions.

In 1938 when the board first began its series of studies, the staffs of the libraries of the city colleges were so ambiguously defined that their exact status was never really understood. The chief librarians were assigned the title of either professor or associate professor and, as such, were included in the faculty. The associate and assistant librarians held no teaching titles but received the same salaries as assistant professor and instructor, respectively. The library assistants, forming the large part of the professional staff, were classified with the clerks, typists, telephone operators, and general administrative assistants. This classification had been effected years ago when men who were not librarians and who knew nothing of library standards or practice were directing the libraries. The library assistants resented their classification for two reasons: (1) They were appointed to do professional work and were performing such duties; (2) their requirements for initial appointment included the baccalaureate and library science degrees, while other employees in the same classification

were required to have no training beyond high school.

When the first proposed change in the new by-laws was distributed, there was general rejoicing in the libraries. The first paragraph of the report which defined the faculty included all library ranks except that of library clerk as members of the "instructional staff." All college employees not in the "instructional staff" were defined as members of the "administrative staff." It was shortly learned, however, that we had rejoiced too soon. When the board actually adopted the by-law, the title, "library assistant," was dropped for no given reason, while the titles, "librarian," "associate librarian," and "assistant librarian," were included with other faculty titles.

#### *Blow at Library Prestige*

This action struck a double-edged blow at library prestige. It returned the library assistants to their former clerical position and split the professional staff into two widely separated groups, a small administrative group who participated in the educational functions of the colleges, and a much larger group whose professional work and status were unrecognized. Thus, the new by-law seemed to legalize a situation which was already bad and which would undoubtedly grow worse with the passage of time. Lowering of general standards seemed a natural *sequitur*, while internally there would be continual resentment on the part of the assistants who were to be accorded by the colleges exactly the same status and pay as the library clerks who performed the filing and typing laid out for them by the assistants. This anomaly finally aroused the entire staff to action. They determined to see to it that the new by-law

did what it was purported to do, namely, improve the functioning of the various departments.

#### *Staff Association Formed*

In the fall of 1938 a staff association of the libraries of the city colleges was formed, and a battle royal with the board ensued. The association sent letters to prominent librarians and to heads of library schools throughout the country asking for advice and aid. Immediately help came from many colleges and universities as well as the A.L.A. Headquarters. Briefs were formulated pointing out the essentials of library service in the college community, the lack of functional difference between one title and another in the library, and the harm done the libraries by such a split in the staff. A complete personnel study and job analysis was made of each library worker by the board. This study was countered with another by the association, comparing standards with those in other college libraries. After two years of discussion, the board finally agreed to amend its original by-law and to include the library assistants in the instructional staff. All library clerks, as well as other college clerks, were placed under the jurisdiction of the Municipal Civil Service Commission.

A letter from Miss McCrum of Wellesley College played such an important part in our brief that I want to quote it here for the benefit of other librarians who may have similar problems to solve:

I have your letter of November 1, 1938 and have read it with much interest and concern. May I go on record as follows in regard to the question of the status of your college library staff? It is my earnest conviction that the work of a college library is throttled at the start if the staff is reduced

to a clerical basis by being put under civil service, or being in any way discriminated against in comparison with the teaching staff. In the library which I have the honor to administer, the librarian has the status of full professor. There are two associate librarians each of whom has the status of associate professor. There are in addition twelve assistants in the library who have a status ranging from instructor to assistant professor. To do the type of intellectual work required in order to make the library effective in the whole educational program of the college, it seems to me essential to select librarians as competent in subject fields and in library techniques as are the teaching faculty. In order to do this it is necessary to offer a status which recognizes the value of the work done.

It also seems to me essential to make a classification within the library staff of professional and nonprofessional workers. The professional workers should offer qualifications which would be acceptable for faculty membership. It is for these that I think the fight for status should be made.

You are welcome to use this letter in any way you see fit.

BLANCHE PRICHARD McCRUM  
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The final by-law established each library as an instructional department in its college with the same autonomy as other departments such as history, chemistry, etc. In other college departments, the chairmen are elected by permanent members of the staff but the librarian, who is an appointive officer similar to deans and directors, automatically becomes chairman of the library department. The librarian and one associate or assistant librarian are delegates to the faculty council. Appointments and promotions are made by a committee on appointments within each library. This committee consists of the librarian, the chairman of the faculty library committee, one associate and one assistant librarian. The board provided

such committees in all departments to avoid the possibility of favoritism in making appointments. Library clerks, however, after passing examinations are appointed from appropriate lists by the municipal civil service commission and are beyond the jurisdiction of the department as far as promotions and standards are concerned.

No qualifications for initial appointment beyond the baccalaureate and library science degrees are required, but higher degrees are naturally looked upon with favor. Many assistants have completed the master's and a few are studying toward the Ph.D. degree.

#### *Salary Range*

Salaries for library assistants range from \$1400 to \$3000 with mandatory increments of \$150 per year up to \$2400. Thereafter, increments are given only for outstanding work. Assistant librarians begin at \$2000 and with permissive increments may work their way to a maximum of \$4500. Associate librarians receive up to \$5600, while chief librarians receive the same salary as associate professor or professor, depending upon which title he holds. Subprofessional salaries begin with clerk grade 1 (page service) \$600 to \$1200; clerk grade 2 receives \$1200 to \$1800, and clerk grade 3, \$1800 to \$2400.

There are still questions relating to qualifications for promotions to higher grades, teaching titles, and various other internal problems. These the staff association hopes to work out gradually with an eye to promoting the standards of the profession and with the hope that college librarianship may soon be established on the firm base of college teaching.