

## Continuing Education

# CE and the Academic Library Administration

As an academic library administrator, I recognize the critical importance of continuing education to the development of staff interests and skills which are essential to the effective operation of the academic library. The past decade has demonstrated, with its developments in areas such as data base searching and networking, that library schools, even as they develop two-year curriculums, do not and cannot provide the breadth and depth of training that new staff require, and that in any case, with the large number of new areas and new interests that are developing, older staff require additional training and skills.

More than ever it is essential for library staff who are to be productive contributors to a library, or libraries, over a long career to be able to keep pace with developments in the field and to undergo substantial professional growth and development over that career. No librarian can expect to provide quality service over a period of as much as forty years simply on the basis of what was learned in library school and what may be learned directly through work experiences. Continuing education is one element of the kind of professional activity that can furnish the necessary growth and development.

An academic library administrator must directly partake of that kind of professional growth and development and must encourage it among the staff. An academic library administrator has broad responsibility for providing both effective library service to an institution and leadership and support to the library staff. This broad responsibility requires support of activities that will enable staff to acquire new skills, maintain quality library service, and be effective contributors to the operation of the library. Continuing education is one, but only one, of those activities.

Continuing education, and all of those activities, must be put into perspective. In both the broader sense and in terms of particular programs, continuing education must be subject to careful evaluation to be certain it is beneficial to both the individual and the library.

As with most professional activities, continuing education cannot be measured simply in terms of participation. It must be measured in terms of the effectiveness of that participation and the impact that that participation, in turn, has on improving the individual staff member's performance and skills. Reward for participation in continuing education activities, whether it comes in the form of salary increases, promotion, or the assignment of new responsibilities, must be based

on what has been learned and how it is put into practice. It must be evaluated by the academic library administrator and staff in their terms. Reward cannot be given simply on the basis of participation, even if an external agency certifies the quality of a particular program, or on the accumulation of a fixed number of "continuing education units."

If it is effective, continuing education should contribute both to the general professional growth and development of the individual and to an improvement in job performance. For that reason the time and money needed for participation in such activities should be a shared responsibility. Neither the individual nor the library should be expected to provide all of the support, but the ratio of those contributions can be complex. It is dependent upon local factors such as institutional policies and resources. It is also dependent upon a careful evaluation of the potential benefit to the individual and the library. While general policy guidelines are needed in each academic library to provide for balance and equity in the allocation of time and money for staff participation in continuing education activities, rigid formulas should be avoided. The academic library administrator needs the flexibility to be able to provide a greater level of support than may be normal for participation by individual staff members in particular continuing education activities that may provide unique benefits to the library or unique opportunities for the individual.

Continuing education is not an end in itself. It must contribute to professional growth and development. What is learned must be put into practice on the job, but it must also be assimilated into the individual's professional knowledge and skills. It must contribute to a broader awareness of the field on the part of the individual. For that reason continuing education cannot be an isolated aspect of the individual's professional life. Just as the knowledge and skills that may be learned in library school cannot form the basis for an effective lifetime library career, neither can that knowledge and those skills simply be coupled with participation, no matter how frequent and how high the quality, in continuing education activities. What is learned, whether in library school or continuing education, cannot be applied only to day-to-day job responsibilities. Given the breadth and complexity of present day librarianship, it must also be applied beyond the local setting. The depth of understanding that comes from research and publication is one important compo-

ment of this broader application. So too is participation in professional activities and organizations whether it be of a general (e.g., membership on a committee or service as an officer of a local, state, or national library association) or more directed (e.g., membership on a committee or service as an officer of a local, state, or national cooperative library activity or network) nature.

The academic library administrator, therefore, expects the library staff to have an interest in and to participate in continuing education activities as appropriate. The academic library administrator also expects, however, that the library staff will use that participation as a means of improving skills and performance, will expect recognition and reward to come from the improvement of skills and performance, will recognize that participation is a shared responsibility of the individual and the library, and will use what may be learned not only as the basis for improved job performance but also as the basis for a broader pattern of professional growth and development.

All of this is to be done, of course, while maintaining ongoing job responsibilities in an era of staff shortages, increasing demands for library service, and the development of new library and individual responsibilities and services. It seems an impossible task. It is remarkable that so much is already being accomplished by so many libraries and so many individuals. It is essential that academic library administrators, managers, and professional staff work together to find ways of increasing their support for continuing education and other activities that contribute to professional growth and development.—*Norman D. Stevens, University Librarian, University of Connecticut Library, Storrs.* ■■

## YESHIVA UPDATE

Legislation to amend the National Labor Relations Act with regard to faculty was introduced to the House of Representatives on June 18. It is expected that hearings will be scheduled for the fall, and that comparable legislation will be introduced into the Senate this session.

This legislation is in response to the February 20 Supreme Court decision on the Yeshiva case (*NLRB v. Yeshiva University*). In a five-four ruling, the justices held that the National Labor Relations Board could not require Yeshiva University to bargain with the board-certified independent faculty association which the Yeshiva faculty had elected as their bargaining agent. The court concluded that because the full-time faculty of this private institution "perform policy-making and discretionary functions" on a high level, they are in effect managerial employees, and therefore excluded from the protection of the National Labor Relations Act.

Since the February ruling, administrators at several institutions have moved to decertify the faculty's bargaining representative, have refused to negotiate successor contracts, or have withdrawn recognition of the faculty's elected representatives.

Because the Supreme Court's decision in *NLRB v. Yeshiva University* is based on an interpretation of the National Labor Relations Act, it may be reversed by Congressional action. H.R. 7619, introduced by Representative Frank Thompson, Jr., chairman of the Labor-Management Relations Subcommittee of the House Education and Labor Committee, would amend the act by adding that "no faculty member or group of faculty members in any educational institution shall be deemed to be managerial or supervisory employees solely because the faculty member or group of faculty members participate in decisions with respect to courses, curriculum, personnel, or other matters of educational policy." ■■

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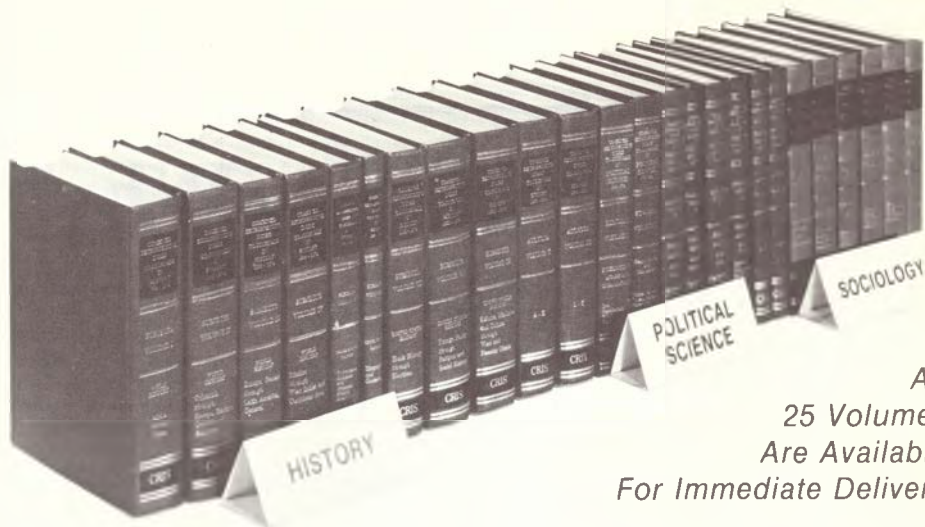
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