

Guidelines for Academic Status of College and University Libraries

A draft

Prepared by the Committee on the Status of Academic Librarians

In 1971, ACRL adopted the “Standards for Faculty Status of College and University Librarians” (revised 2001). ACRL supports faculty rank, status, and tenure for librarians and has developed the following documents in support of this concept:

1. ACRL “Guidelines and Procedures for Screening and Appointment of Academic Librarians” (1977).

2. ACRL/AAUP/AAC “Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians” (1972).

3. ACRL “Model Statement of Criteria and Procedures for Appointment, Promotion in Academic Rank, and Tenure for College and University Librarians” (1987).

ACRL also has developed the following guidelines for academic librarians without faculty status to ensure that their rights, privileges, and responsibilities reflect their integral role in the mission of their institutions.

1. Professional responsibilities. Librarians should be assigned responsibilities matched to their educational competencies and interests. They should have maximum latitude in fulfilling their responsibilities. Committees of their peers and supervisory personnel should regularly and vigorously review their performance. Review standards and procedures should be published and uniformly applied; reviewing bodies should have access to all appropriate documentation.

2. Governance. The library exists to support the teaching and research functions of the institution. Thus librarians should participate in the development of the institution’s

mission, curriculum, and governance. Librarians should participate in the development of policies and procedures for their institution, and in the hiring, review, retention, and continuing appointment of their peers.

3. Contracts. A librarian’s appointment should be by written contract of no less than one year. The contract should state the terms and conditions of service and grant security of employment for the contractual period. After a period of no longer than seven years, and through a process which includes peer review, librarians should be granted continuing employment if they have met the appropriate conditions and standards.

4. Compensation. The salary scale and benefits for librarians should be the same as for other academic categories with equivalent education, experience, or responsibility.

5. Promotion and salary increases. Librarians should be promoted through ranks on the basis of their professional proficiency and effectiveness. Procedures for promotion and salary increases should include a peer review. Librarians should have ranks equivalent to those of the faculty.

6. Leaves and research funds. Librarians should be eligible for internal and external research funds, leaves of absence, sabbaticals, and other means of administrative support to promote their active participation in research and other professional activities.

7. Academic freedom. Librarians are entitled to the protection of academic freedom as set forth in the American Association of University Professors 1940 Statement

of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure.

8. Dismissal or nonreappointment.

The institution may dismiss a librarian during the contractual period only for just cause and through academic due process. Nonreappointment should involve adequate notice, peer review, and access to a grievance procedure.

9. Grievance. Librarians should have access to grievance procedures. These should include steps to be completed within specified time limits and effective safeguards against reprisal by the institution or abuse of the procedures by the grievant. They must be consistent with applicable institutional regulations and contracts.

Development and revision of the guidelines

In January 2000, the Standards and Accreditation Committee (SAC) referred two documents to the Committee on the Status of Academic Librarians for revision: "Standards for Faculty Status of College and University Librarians" and "Guidelines for Academic Status of College and University Libraries." SAC also asked that consideration be given to combining the two documents.

After much discussion, it was concluded that the documents should remain separate, primarily because: 1) they address entirely different issues and it would cause confusion to combine the concepts into a single document; 2) it would weaken the argument for improvement at those institutions that do award limited faculty status to librarians; and 3) librarians at institutions with no hope of faculty status would have no clear guidelines to support improvement within their status.

The "Standards for Faculty Status of College and University Librarians" went through the revision process, was approved at Midwinter 2001, and the final version was published in the March 2001 *C&RL News*.

The present "Guidelines for Academic Status of College and University Librarians," published in 1990, were revised at the committee's meeting in June 2001. The committee is seeking input on this draft through postings to electronic discussion lists, via e-mail to Bill Nelson (wnelson@aug.edu), and in a public forum.

The Committee on the Status of Academic Librarians will be conducting an open hearing at the upcoming ALA Midwinter Meeting in New Orleans to solicit input from the membership on these changes and to address your concerns with the guidelines.

Comments will be incorporated into the final document, which will be presented to SAC for recommendation of final approval by ACRL and ALA.

Committee members past and present who have worked on this document include: Navjit Brar, Martin Goldberg, Phillip Jones, Sharon McCaslin, Bill Nelson, Samson Soong, Anita Talar, and Glenda Thornton; and interns James Chervinko, Valerie Feinman, and Revil Veli. ■

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- **Davidson College** (Davidson, North Carolina): <http://www.davidson.edu>
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lege (Charlotte, North Carolina): <http://www.cpcc.cc.nc.us>

Heading out of Charlotte

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The Great Smoky Mountains are only two hours to the west of Charlotte, and the Atlantic Coast beaches are a bit over three hours to the east. Some of the world's best golf courses are only an hour's drive east of Charlotte. ■