library school really does represent an *exchange*—a two-way transaction with benefits going both ways.

**Education and Role of Academic Librarians**

Anthony Yueh–shan Wei*

In recent years there is a strong and growing support to the idea that the university library is an integral part of the learning process, and the academic librarians are equal colleagues of the teaching faculty. Consequently the preparation and role of academic librarians should cope with the new trend and development in American higher education.

I. **The Change in American College Education:**

Although it is not easy to change a traditional institution, something is going on in American higher learning. Institutions as gardens of virtue, Colleges as a paradise of four golden years, the B. A. as I. D. card to the middle class society,¹ and professors as proprietors of controlled knowledge are all ideas currently being discussed and criticized by both committed faculty and students. Fortunately the result of today's dissatisfaction of American colleges, is that the true meaning of education is being scrutinized and studied. Specifically, two particular features are gaining ground in education.

A. Interdisciplinary program and thematic major:

Both faculty and students realize that education is not limited nor principally intended to develop a particular skill for

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a certain position in the society, but it has as its objective the personal fulfillment, the developing of all aspects of one's potential which contribute to individualization and personality. A too detailed compartmentalization of knowledge is not at all a realistic and definitely not the best way to educate the whole person. Thus interdisciplinary programs are being widely introduced in colleges across the country.

In addition to the interdisciplinary program that is mostly limited to the organization of particular courses, the thematic major was recently introduced creating a different type of college. In this program, students should work constantly with a responsible and conscientious faculty adviser to plan the general program and particular courses to develop his personal talents.

B. Independent Study:

In addition to more flexible programs, teaching methods are drastically changing in American higher education. Professors are now less convinced that they are the only symbols of knowledge, and that the exact transmission of what mankind achieved in the past is not a sure way of securing progress in the future. These changes together with a more trustful confidence in the person of the student, the teaching method of independent study is developing and widely gaining more acceptance in the modern colleges.

II. How Does This Change Affect College Libraries:

In order to make "independent study", "thematic major", etc. meaningful and not just an euphemism for a hidden irresponsibility on the part of both faculty and students, the library must be studied, evaluated and used. To reach this point, I fail to see how a few lectures on library orientation during the freshman year could be sufficient. More serious and demanding courses on general references and resources in the different subject fields should be offered. An advanced course on research methodology is indispensible for graduate students before they undertake their endeavor.
III. How Does the Newly Developed Teaching Method Affect the Librarians:

With the introduction of the recently developed teaching method into American colleges, professors begin to feel rather sharply their limitation and confess their deficiencies. Professor Leuba say: "only too true that we professors have not done as well as we might have done as educators. We lecture, write and enjoy the sound and sight of our own words too much. Equally harmful is our too-narrow specialization within our general subject area. We may be unaware of the best books and other educational media available outside of a small segment of that area..... The professors' failures may be the librarians' opportunity. Perhaps librarians can develop that balance between over-specialization and over-generalization which would be most appropriate for the effective guidance of undergraduates. In one small respect, librarians have already begun to grasp this opportunity. They have turned the tables on the professors and use the latter as expert consultants to write brief reviews for their book-review journal Choice. (Ye Gods, are we professors to become mere librarians' helpers?)

How many librarians are currently aware of these opportunities? How many of them are willing and prepared to accept the challenge of this new situation? Are librarians ready to participate in and improve upon this currently imperfect process of guiding, motivating students into serious study; of providing opportunities for students to react to the educational materials to which they are exposed; and of examining and evaluating student performance? In one word, are librarians prepared to assume the role of educators? Librarians for many years have been and still are struggling for faculty status and rank, but have they done anything to justify this demand by improving the educational quality of librarianship? Have they made appropriate effort to develop their personal scholarship or are they satisfied to enjoy the ivory tower of technical services behind the scene? Support of the educational process of the institution and possessing a graduate degree does not ipso
facto qualify a person to be admitted to faculty status and rank; other personnel in the institution may have these two prerogatives and nevertheless are not considered as faculty members (e.g. health personnel, security officer and in some instances the staff of the counseling center). With the introduction of new programs, faculty status and rank are available to librarians. It is up to them to prove that they are qualified and willing to accept the challenge and responsibility as well as the benefits. Most college librarians do not seem to be at a level necessary to accept this challenge, and there are even those who are not willing to do anything about it. The complaint from educators that librarians are not prepared to actively and directly participate in the educational process is not an isolated voice in the desert. Therefore, the educational quality of librarianship must be improved. "If librarians are to instruct effectively, they must know something about theories of learning, educational philosophy and psychology, principles of curriculum construction, teaching method and procedures, and the social forces which affect education. They must see themselves, and must be seen by faculty and students alike, not as clerks, not as information specialists, not as purveyors of information, but as educators." Among many other things to improve the present situation of college librarianship, I would like to mention two briefly.

A. Subject competence:

The ALA Standard for College Libraries prepared by ACRL under the chairmanship of Felix Hirsch fifteen years ago indicated that academic librarians "should be expected to do graduate work in such areas as would contribute to their effectiveness in their respective positions. In some instances such a program of study might well lead to a second or third Master's degree rather than to Ph. D. degree." Ralph Ellisworth, responding in 1963 to the question of what is the one major problem, which still faces the library profession says, "It is clear to me that we should be staffing our university libraries with librarians who have Ph. D.'s in a subject field, plus a library education that places heavy emphasis on biblio-
graphy and analysis of the literature of scholarship."  6

Josey and Blake supporting the same idea, say: "The aca-
demic librarian needs a subject master's or doctoral degree for
many reasons. He should be one of a corps of specialists in
the library, spread over all the academic disciplines, who knows
his subject and is familiar with what the library has and how
to find it. He should be selecting the important new and re-
trospective materials in the subject he knows. He should be
intimately familiar, because he has done research himself, with
the research process. He should be able to guide, to teach the
students in his institution how to find the materials of schol-
larship."  7

In spite of these and other recommendations, most of the
college librarians today do not meet these ACRL standards.
Moreover in many instances academic librarians are not inte-
rested in acquiring a second Masters degree and feel it is not
necessary.

The Council on Library Resources, aware of the present
qualitative situation of academic librarians, has recently allocated
$103,000 to support fellowships at the University of Chicago
for Ph.D.'s in other disciplines to earn Master degree in
library science. The idea is to bring highly qualified specialists
into librarianship.  8 This action of the Council on Library
Resources caused strong reaction from K. Tracy and Don
Lanier, two concerned librarians, striving for excellence in this
profession. They view it as "a slap in the face of all librarians"
and contend that librarianship will not benefit from this pro-
gram and will not be able to take advantage of the Ph.D.'s
subject expertise for reference and acquisitions, because they
will be immediately placed in high management positions.  9 I
sympathize with these two excellent librarians and wish their
number will increase and soon. I have to say however, that
maybe this slap is a well deserved one for many librarians.
I agree with them that librarianship probably will not benefit
from this program, not because this highly qualified blood will
be placed in high administrative positions, but because they
simply will not be hired. The staff of the university library
I am associated with, consistently turned down applicants with
M. L. S. and Ph. D. degrees in subject fields as area specialists, because their presence would have been threatening and would have made the rest of the library staff feel uncomfortable.

This attitude is a disservice to a growing number of librarians committed to high quality scholarship, and to the library profession itself in perpetuating the state of mediocrity. I only hope the number of this type of University Library is limited.

B. Knowledge of Languages:

With present day communication, scholarship can hardly be limited to a particular country or language. Librarians should possess a working knowledge of at least two languages. By working knowledge, I do not mean the ability to decipher a title-page, because in order to be familiar with educational resources, a deeper knowledge of widely known languages is necessary.

IV. Conclusion:

The new teaching program in American colleges unveiled a timely opportunity for librarians. Their service is needed and without any controversy will be acknowledged, provided they do develop scholarly competency. Otherwise more and more teaching faculty will take library courses and obtain library degrees in order to support their own teaching program.

A real knowledge of a subject combined with languages will make the academic librarian not only colleague of the teaching faculty, but, perhaps more important, will enable him to serve significantly the students of his institution.

References

3. Clarence Leuba refers: "To most of my colleagues in psychology, for instance, a librarian would seem unqualified to guide a student seeking to orient himself in a specific aspect of psychology, such as motivation, or even in a general way in psychology as a whole." *Op. cit.* p. 114.

**Comments: Thein Swe**

Having been asked to comment on some of the problems and nuances surrounding employment opportunities for American trained librarians from foreign countries, I feel that I must first begin by posing the question as to what type of library employment is being sought at. Surely, the inherent pre-conditions for first qualifying for consideration for employment differ drastically between the types of libraries themselves. For example, Federal libraries would normally require citizenship as would some State and some public libraries, although of course there are exceptions. The exceptions seem to be built around language expertise, or around certain areas of expertise which an American citizen would

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