

The Library in a Community College

THERE ARE practically as many special fields of library work as there are types of libraries. All librarians owe it to themselves and to their profession to become familiar with any new phase of librarianship. The community college library is a late arrival on the library service scene. For a clearer view of this type of library and its function, let us examine the purpose and organization of its parent institution.

The appearance and growth of the two-year institutions, popularly known as "community colleges" constitute an important recent trend in higher education. In the wake of increased college enrollments and accompanying limited facilities, the movement may hardly be characterized as an ephemeral contribution. These colleges are a direct result of numerous scientific, industrial, and technological changes which demand more trained technicians at the sub-professional level. Community colleges usually offer two-year terminal programs in several technical fields. Many community colleges provide not only terminal curricula, but work acceptable for transfer to four-year colleges. However, unlike other junior colleges, the community college is not primarily motivated by preparation for the four-year college. Again, the community college differs from the technical institute, since it is not exclusively devoted to the development of technical skills. Although students may major in a chosen curriculum as early as the first semester, general college work is never neglected. Aligned with traditional higher education, students are required to

take courses in communication arts, science, mathematics, and the social sciences. Community college programs also stress the fundamental purpose of American democracy and its way of life through the promotion of good citizenship. The education achieved at these local colleges enables graduates to qualify for not one, but several jobs in their chosen fields. Some community college programs make it possible for students to spend part of the academic year in paid employment, appropriate to their specialities. This cooperative work is followed up and evaluated by the faculty involved. Such positions frequently lead to permanent offers after graduation. The amount, kind, and variety of courses offered by each college varies with the institution and the needs of its community. The following prevailing departments in existing community colleges indicate the scope of the whole educational enterprise:

Aircraft Operations, Apparel & Fashion Technology, Automotive Technology, Business Technology, Chemical Technology, Commercial Art, Construction Technology, Dental Hygiene & Dental Laboratory Technology, Distribution (Retail & Industrial), Electrical Technology, Hotel Technology (Culinary & Administration), Mechanical & Metallurgical Technology, Medical Laboratory Technology, Nursing, Optical Technology, Pre-Engineering, Printing Technology, Refrigeration, Heating & Air Conditioning Technology, Secretarial Technology (Legal, Medical), Textile Design.

One may readily recognize the implications of such diverse curricular offerings. The community college library is comparable in character, if not in scope, to the large departmental library system. Where that system can separately house

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and departmentalize its special collections, the community college library must adequately represent each department in a single, unified library collection. The professional staff must be aware of the objectives, and to a degree, of the content of the various technical courses, since it is responsible for maintaining these special collections. The community college library might indeed claim multiple membership in Special Libraries Association, on the grounds that it is virtually several special libraries. Daily requests for material on unrelated disciplines, covering topics like epoxy resins, sauce bordelaise, die-casting, acrylic crowns, D.C. circuits, and parasitology, must be supplied from an otherwise selective collection. The librarian must inform the faculty about suitable texts, new reference tools, periodical subscriptions, and other bibliographic sources. Special efforts should be exerted to eliminate obsolete works, acquire new titles, and generally maintain a vital collection. All technical books selected for the library ought to be geared to the proper educational level. Realizing that scientific literature is both voluminous and expensive, the library must supplement its collection through interlibrary loans. The New York State Library recently arranged an experimental cooperative venture in the science and technology fields. The state authorized a generous appropriation for the immediate purchase of scientific literature. Consequently, colleges throughout the state may avail themselves of many new technical publications, including periodicals, documents, theses, and dissertations in both book and photo-reproduction form. Furthermore, a plan has been evolved for creating a science and technology section of the State Library, which might solve many scientific literature service problems of colleges. There is another proposal for preparation and distribution of a catalog of the State Library

holdings to college libraries. Inevitably the library plays a significant part in any college's attempt to meet high regional accreditation standards. Therefore, in order to fulfill its role as a college library, the collection must be well rounded and also strong in the liberal arts. At the community colleges where foreign language education is omitted, the library may purchase few such works. A community college library is occasionally handicapped by unorthodox accommodations in quarters converted from a factory, residential mansion, or office building. Even inadequate physical plants can be mastered with the resourceful use of paints, displays, and exhibits, in addition to the studied arrangement of library books, equipment, and furniture. Granted the burdens placed upon the community college library are numerous, the fact remains that the library can and does meet the enormous challenge.

Liberal entrance requirements bring a heterogeneous group of students to the community colleges. Students who possess no training in basic library procedure or research methods are promptly confronted with the writing of technical reports and other specialized assignments. The librarian must instruct incoming students in library skills, encourage utilization of library resources, and cultivate effectual research techniques, which will facilitate the work of the technician. The library staff should cooperate with other instructional staff members in the guidance of student reading and study activities. By correlating classroom lectures and laboratory work with the printed word, the library clearly becomes the *sine qua non* of college learning.

A community college library in New York state is veritably governed by the State University motto, "Let each become all he is capable of being." There are eleven community colleges in New York state, and several others are presently being planned. At least two of the

projected institutions are to be located in the metropolitan area. As community colleges in the United States increase, expand, and face the future, they will require larger budgets. Surely the library will wish to demonstrate its *raison d'être*, in order to partake of a fair share of its institution's wealth. In line with this concept, the professional staff should associate itself with the over-all aims and activities of the college, not merely those directly related to the library. As time permits, the librarian should attend faculty meetings, serve on college committees, instruct classes, and even suggest curricular changes or developments.

In appropriate locales, the librarian might possibly initiate a two-year community college program in special librarianship. The program could combine elementary courses in reference, cataloging, classification, indexing, abstracting, and subject filing, with training in secretarial skills. Successful trainees could qualify for jobs as library assistants, pre- or sub-professionals, and for other positions unfilled by graduate trained librarians. The demand for library personnel is much greater than the supply, particularly in small special libraries. Some libraries are now understaffed, while others sacrifice standards by engaging persons with no formal library training. A two-year community college curriculum in library service, leading to the Associate in Applied Science degree, could meet the needs of those who seek college level library training or of train-

ees, short of the customary four- or five-year period. A two-year college library program might have inestimable value for the profession. It could liberate the five-year, graduate-trained librarian from routine, operational tasks and allow him to concentrate on the somewhat more scholarly and creative aspects of librarianship. The work of librarians like that of other professionals, which must be supplemented by the work of technical assistants and in-service training, will never completely substitute for formal education of these individuals.

The aforementioned proposal is simply one example of many meritorious projects an imaginative community college librarian might undertake. The library can engender extensive good will for the college and is often an informal public relations agency. Community college librarians may collaborate by active participation in both local and national library and education organizations by writing about the solutions of common service problems in the professional literature, by personal contacts, and by distribution and exchange of catalogs, accession lists, progress reports, and other college publications. Since the entire community college movement is yet experimental, cooperation among community college librarians is most essential. Persons encountering similar occupational conditions should freely exchange ideas. This interchange of knowledge can result only in mutual benefits and reciprocal enrichment.

Russian Electronics Journals

Translation of three Russian electronics journals into English will be made possible by a seventy thousand dollar grant from the National Science Foundation. The project was proposed by the M.I.T. Research Laboratory of Electronics for the purpose of making available to American engineers information about the progress and methods in Russian electronics research. American libraries and researchers will be able to subscribe to the English versions of the three journals, *Radio Tekhnika i Elektronika*, *Radio Tekhnika*, and *Elektrosviaz*.