

Rank, Status, and Contribution of Academic Librarians as Perceived by the Teaching Faculty at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

A questionnaire survey was conducted to determine the teaching faculties' perceptions of the academic librarians at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Each question was analyzed by academic unit and rank of the respondents. Service was perceived as the most important function of the librarians, but many teaching faculty members indicated that librarians should conduct research if they are to be awarded faculty rank and status. The higher-ranking respondents used the library materials and the services of the librarians most often. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents were in favor of academic librarians at SIU-C having faculty rank and status.

AS EARLY AS 1955 Patricia Knapp suggested as a topic for analysis and research, "How do librarians rate with their faculty colleagues and are they thought of by others primarily as administrators, as educators, or as bookmen?"¹ Although many articles have dealt with the subject of academic status for librarians, as can be seen by the extensive bibliography compiled by Nancy Huling,² only two were concerned with the teaching faculties' perceptions of status for academic librarians.

In the late 1950s in a study conducted by Patricia Knapp, who questioned faculty members as to whether librarians should hold faculty rank and status, the respondents at Knox, College, Galesburg, Illinois, indicated that only the head librarian was qualified and most were not in favor of faculty rank for the rest of the library staff.³

The second study, conducted of English Department faculty members at the Uni-

versity of Kentucky by Florence Holbrook, indicated that most answering the question "Should librarians be given faculty rank" replied yes but put stipulations on the rank, such as educational qualifications and research efforts.⁴

Between the years 1966 and 1975 faculty status for librarians increased overall from 50 percent to 75 percent.⁵ One reason for the increase was that librarians concerned with their own role in the academic community felt their goals pertaining to teaching, research, and service warranted faculty status. As a result the members of the Association of College and Research Libraries endorsed a "Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians," as of April 26, 1972.⁶

Academic librarians claim to be professors whose major occupational task is teaching yet, as mentioned earlier, they have not been recognized as professors by professors.⁷ In the end the image and prestige of academic librarians will be based upon their academic preparation, service, and contributions to their colleges and universities.⁸

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Because of the lack of data concerning the teaching faculties' perception of faculty status for academic librarians, a study was undertaken at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale (SIU-C) to determine this perception. SIU-C is a comprehensive, state-supported university with 22,000 students enrolled. Academic librarians presently have academic rank and status along with the teaching faculty.

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire (see appendix A) was sent via campus mail to 50 percent, randomly selected, of the full-time teaching faculty assigned to academic units. A total of 507 faculty members received the questionnaire and 386 responded. Of these, 384 responses were usable, a 75.7 percent response. The computer program SAS (Statistical Analysis System) was used to determine percentages. It was hoped that the data collected would show the perceptions of the teaching faculty toward the academic librarians. This information would indicate whether the perceptions needed to be improved and possibly would indicate areas of needed improvement.

The total number and percentage of the full-time teaching faculty and of those responding to the questionnaire were from ten academic units, shown in table 1. Twenty-five percent of the respondents held the rank of full professor, 28 percent were associate professors, 37 percent were assis-

tant professors, and 10 percent were instructors.

Each question was analyzed to identify differences in responses and perceptions according to rank or academic unit of the respondents. The law faculty responses were deleted, because there were too few to consider.

RESULTS

Three questions were asked to gain background information on the respondents. In response to the question "How often do you use the library," it was found that 6 percent of those responding used the library daily, 26 percent used the library several times a week, 31 percent used the library once a week, and 36 percent used the library once a month or less. Thirty-seven percent of the professors used the library several times a week or more, whereas 27 percent of the associate professors, 39 percent of the assistant professors, and 16 percent of the instructors did so (table 2).

In looking at the use of the library by faculty members from the various schools and colleges (table 3), 50 percent of the faculty responding in the College of Liberal Arts indicated they used the library several times a week or more, whereas 43 percent of the faculty responding in the College of Science, 42 percent of the faculty responding in the College of Communications and Fine Arts, 24 percent of the faculty responding in the College of Education, and

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF FACULTY AND RESPONDENTS BY ACADEMIC UNIT

Units	University Faculty		Respondents*	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Agriculture	44	4	20	5
Business and Administration	51	5	20	5
Communications and Fine Arts	121	12	47	12
Education	177	18	71	18
Engineering and Technology	44	4	15	4
Human Resources	81	8	32	8
Liberal Arts	266	26	102	26
Law	20	2	5	1
Science	105	10	37	10
Technical Careers	105	10	37	10
Total	1,014	99	386	99

*The questionnaire was sent only to 50 percent of randomly selected full-time teaching faculty.

TABLE 2
RESPONDENTS' USE OF LIBRARY BY ACADEMIC RANK

Rank	Almost Daily (Percentage)	Several Times a Week (Percentage)	Once a Week (Percentage)	Once a Month or Less (Percentage)
Professor	9	28	31	32
Associate professor	6	21	34	39
Assistant professor	5	34	30	31
Instructor	8	8	29	55
All faculty	6	26	31	36

TABLE 3
RESPONDENTS' USE OF LIBRARY BY ACADEMIC UNIT

Unit	Almost Daily (Percentage)	Several Times a Week (Percentage)	Once a Week (Percentage)	Once a Month or Less (Percentage)
Agriculture	0	15	45	40
Business and Administration	0	15	50	35
Communications and Fine Arts	6	36	26	32
Education	3	21	27	48
Engineering and Technology	0	7	29	64
Human Resources	0	22	31	47
Liberal Arts	16	34	32	19
Science	5	38	43	13
Technical Careers	0	8	19	73

22 percent of the faculty responding in the College of Human Resources did so. In all other schools and colleges less than 15 percent of the responding faculty indicated that intensity of library use.

In response to the question "Have you ever requested a librarian to speak to one of your classes on the resources of the library," 5 percent of the respondents indicated that a librarian was requested to do this every semester. Sixteen percent indicated they only occasionally made such a request of the librarian, and 74 percent said they never had made such a request. Many faculty members indicated they had never thought to make such a request. No discernible differences on this question were found when grouping the respondents by professorial rank. Fourteen percent of the faculty responding in the College of Education and 10 percent in the School of Agriculture had a librarian speak on library resources every semester. In all other schools and colleges fewer than 10 percent of the

respondents made such requests each semester. Thirty-six percent of the faculty responding in the School of Engineering and Technology, 34 percent of the faculty responding in the College of Education, and 25 percent of the faculty responding in the School of Agriculture indicated they occasionally had a librarian speak on resources. In all other schools and colleges 13 percent or fewer of the responding faculty made such occasional requests (table 4).

In asking the next question, "What contact have you had with librarians other than in the library setting," the author hoped to determine whether the teaching faculty viewed librarians as contributing members of the faculty in the university as a whole. In response to this question, 15 percent of the faculty indicated they had contact with librarians on master's committees, Ph.D. committees, or search committees formed to fill vacant positions. Thirty-three percent of the faculty indicated they come in contact with librarians on university-wide commit-

TABLE 4
 "HAVE YOU EVER REQUESTED A LIBRARIAN TO SPEAK TO ONE OF YOUR
 CLASSES ON THE RESOURCES OF THE LIBRARY?"

Unit	Every Semester (Percentage)	Occasionally (Percentage)	Never (Percentage)	Other (Percentage)
Agriculture	10	25	55	10
Business and Administration	0	5	90	5
Communications and Fine Arts	4	11	77	4
Education	14	34	48	4
Engineering and Technology	0	36	57	7
Human Resources	6	6	78	9
Liberal Arts	3	13	82	1
Science	0	8	84	8
Technical Careers	0	6	92	3
All faculty	5	16	74	5

tees such as the faculty senate or graduate council, and 15 percent of the faculty indicated they had had no contact with librarians other than in the library setting. The remainder of the faculty had contact with librarians at social functions, professional society functions, and in research collaboration.

A second group of questions was used to determine the teaching faculties' perceptions of the academic library and librarians at SIU-C. When asked "How important do you view the library collection as part of your teaching and research," 63 percent of the faculty indicated the library collection was indispensable, 17 percent of the faculty indicated the collection was very important, and 5 percent indicated it was either of little importance or not important. Professorial rank did not appear to make a difference in the faculty views. Seventy-five percent of those at the rank of assistant professor and higher viewed the library collection as indispensable, whereas only 36 percent of the instructors felt this way.

In response to the question "How important do you view the librarian as assisting in your teaching and research," 24 percent of the faculty indicated the librarian was indispensable, 25 percent indicated the librarian was very important, 29 percent indicated the librarian was important, and 22 percent indicated the librarian was of little or no importance. When this question was considered by academic units, few discernible differences between academic-unit responses

were found. In considering the various faculty ranks, 34 percent of the professors said the librarian was indispensable to their teaching and research whereas only 21 percent of the associate and 22 percent of the assistant professors indicated this was the case. It appears that as faculty members progress to the rank of professor their view of the relative importance of the librarian to them is enhanced (table 5).

In response to the question concerning the help received from librarians in the SIU-C library, 13 percent of the faculty responding indicated the help received was indispensable, 44 percent said it was very helpful, and 33 percent indicated it was helpful. Ten percent of the responding faculty indicated librarians had been of little or no help. When this question was considered by academic units, few discernible differences between academic-unit responses were found. In considering the various faculty ranks, an increase of the feeling that librarians are indispensable was shown as the faculty approached professorial rank (table 6). Twelve percent of those indicating librarians are indispensable were instructors, 9 percent were assistant professors, 14 percent were associate professors, and 19 percent were professors. Relatively equal percentages (44 percent) of the faculty responding indicated the librarian had been very helpful.

The next question asked the faculty to indicate how much librarians contribute to the instruction of students in the university

TABLE 5
 "HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU VIEW THE LIBRARIAN AS ASSISTING
 IN YOUR TEACHING AND RESEARCH?"

Rank	Indispensable (Percentage)	Very Important (Percentage)	Important (Percentage)	Of Little or No Importance (Percentage)
Professor	34	22	26	18
Associate professor	21	32	26	21
Assistant professor	22	25	31	22
Instructor	13	18	41	28
All faculty	24	25	29	22

TABLE 6
 "HAS THE HELP YOU RECEIVED FROM LIBRARIANS IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY BEEN: _____"

Rank	Indispensable (Percentage)	Very Helpful (Percentage)	Helpful (Percentage)	Of Little or No Help (Percentage)
Professor	19	49	24	8
Associate professor	14	44	34	8
Assistant professor	9	41	37	13
Instructor	12	35	41	12
All faculty	13	44	33	10

setting. Eighteen percent of the faculty indicated the librarians contributed a very substantial amount to the instruction of students, 33 percent indicated the librarians contributed a substantial amount, 31 percent indicated librarians contributed some, and 18 percent indicated librarians contributed very little or none. Only small differences were found on this question when grouping the respondents by professorial rank.

The faculty responding from the College of Communications and Fine Arts, the College of Liberal Arts, and the College of Education had the highest percentage indicating the librarians contributed a very substantial amount to the instruction of students. Fifty percent of the faculty in the schools and colleges other than the College of Business and Administration, School of Engineering and Technology, and College of Science indicated that the librarians contributed a substantial amount or very substantial amount to the instruction of students in the university setting (table 7).

In response to the question "Do you feel librarians should conduct research," 17 per-

cent of the faculty responding felt that librarians should conduct research on practical topics related to improving service. Two percent of the faculty indicated that librarians should conduct research on scholarly library topics whereas 56 percent of the respondents indicated that librarians should conduct research on both of the previously named topics. Eight percent of the respondents indicated that librarians should not conduct research and 16 percent indicated it should be up to the individual librarians whether they conduct research or not. No discernible differences were found on this question when grouping the respondents by either academic unit or professorial rank.

In response to the question "How much released time should librarians be given to conduct research," 13 percent of the faculty responding indicated that no time should be given to librarians for research use. Twenty-one percent of the responding faculty indicated four hours per week should be allowed, and 31 percent of those responding felt librarians should be allowed eight hours per week released time. Eight percent of the faculty indicated that twelve hours per

TABLE 7
 "HOW MUCH DO YOU FEEL LIBRARIANS CONTRIBUTE TO THE INSTRUCTION
 OF STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY SETTING?"

Unit	Very Substantial Amount (Percentage)	Substantial Amount (Percentage)	Some (Percentage)	Very Little or None (Percentage)
Agriculture	5	47	32	16
Business and Administration	16	16	47	21
Communications and Fine Arts	27	29	27	18
Education	20	38	32	10
Engineering and Technology	14	21	50	15
Human Resources	10	42	29	19
Liberal Arts	23	26	28	23
Science	11	31	31	26
Technical Careers	6	43	40	12
All faculty	18	33	31	18

week was appropriate, and 27 percent indicated the amount of time allowed would depend on the needs of the individual project. No discernible differences were found on this question when grouping the respondents by either academic unit or professorial rank.

The respondents were asked to rank the librarians' role in the university in terms of teaching, research, and service. Eighty-five percent indicated they perceived the major duties of librarians to be those of service to students and faculty. Eight percent indicated research was the most important function, and 5 percent indicated teaching was the most important. Two percent indicated other items were most important, such as library organization and management. Generally no discernible differences were found on this question when grouping the respondents by either academic unit or professorial rank.

Twenty-eight percent of the responding faculty viewed librarians as equal to teaching faculty, whereas 65 percent viewed librarians as professionals, rather than faculty. Only 7 percent of the respondents viewed librarians as nonprofessional or equal to clerical or secretarial help. No discernible differences on this question were found when grouping the respondents by professorial rank.

Forty-four percent of the responding faculty in the College of Education, 35 per-

cent of the responding faculty in the School of Technical Careers, 33 percent of the responding faculty in the College of Communication and Fine Arts, and 29 percent of the responding faculty in the College of Liberal Arts indicated that the librarians were faculty equal to teaching faculty. Only 3 percent of the responding faculty of the College of Science and 10 percent of the faculty of the College of Business and Administration viewed the librarians as such (table 8).

When asked "Should librarians have faculty rank and status," 57 percent (201) of the responding faculty responded affirmatively whereas 43 percent (148) responded negatively. No discernible differences on this question were found when grouping the respondents by professorial rank. Sixty-four percent of the respondents in the School of Engineering and Technology and College of Science indicated that librarians should not have faculty rank and status. Nearly 50 percent or more of the responding faculty in all other schools and colleges indicated that librarians should have faculty rank and status (table 9).

The 57 percent (201) responding yes to the previous question were asked if they felt a limit to the rank librarians could obtain should be imposed. Of those 201 respondents, 86 percent indicated no limit should be imposed and 14 percent indicated a limit should be imposed.

TABLE 8
 "DO YOU VIEW LIBRARIANS AS: _____"

Unit	Faculty Equal with Teaching Faculty (Percentage)	Professionals (Percentage)	Non- professionals (Percentage)	Clerical and Secretarial (Percentage)
Agriculture	20	60	0	20
Business and Administration	10	70	15	5
Communications and Fine Arts	33	59	2	7
Education	44	53	3	0
Engineering and Technology	20	73	0	7
Human Resources	23	68	0	10
Liberal Arts	29	66	1	4
Science	3	97	0	0
Technical Careers	35	59	3	3
All faculty	28	65	2	5

TABLE 9
 "SHOULD LIBRARIANS HAVE FACULTY RANK AND STATUS?"

Unit	Yes (Percentage)	No (Percentage)
Agriculture	55	45
Business and Administration	53	47
Communications and Fine Arts	50	50
Education	67	33
Engineering and Technology	38	62
Human Resources	48	52
Liberal Arts	58	42
Science	34	66
Technical Careers	79	21
All faculty	57	43

Of the 148 faculty members indicating that librarians should not have faculty rank and status, 58 percent indicated it was due to insufficient teaching; 40 percent indicated it was due to insufficient research and publications; 13 percent indicated it was due to insufficient service; and 27 percent indicated it was due to insufficient education. Thirty-seven percent also listed a variety of other reasons why librarians should not have faculty rank and status. The numbers total more than 100 percent because respondents could check multiple reasons for denying librarians faculty rank and status.

CONCLUSION

Sixty-three percent of the respondents

used the library once a week or more, which corresponded exactly with the percentage of faculty indicating they viewed the library collection an indispensable part of their teaching and research. Seventy-five percent of the respondents in every academic rank indicated the library collection was either very important or indispensable. Several faculty members who recorded a lesser amount of usage indicated it depended on their teaching and research needs at any time. The other 25 percent may need to be educated as to the procedures in requesting new materials in their research areas. Attendance at orientation workshops held for new faculty members to inform them of the materials and services

provided in the university library should be encouraged. All faculty members should be made aware of the computerized literature-searching service offered in the university library.

Another area in public relations that could be initiated by the librarians is to volunteer to teach classes on the resources of the library. Although many classes are currently brought to the library each semester for one-to-three hours of instruction, more faculty should be made aware of this service. A bibliographic instruction course on how to use the library is currently offered for one credit hour. These classes represent direct teaching by librarians. Unfortunately, the students are the ones who suffer if they are not made aware of the library resources and of the course offered on its use.

The teaching faculty are also confused as to how much instruction of students is done on a one-to-one basis in the library. Many faculty members indicated they had no way of knowing how much individual instruction was given on how to use the library resources when librarians assisted students in finding information. In addition, faculty members should be made aware of the instructional materials librarians prepare for the students. Users' guides and subject bibliographies are prepared much the same way and with similar intent as teachers prepare instructional materials. Both are indirect forms of teaching, which are difficult to measure.

On the whole, the teaching faculty thought that librarians should conduct research on topics of their own choosing and that released time should be granted for this. Several faculty members indicated that in order to have faculty rank, research was a necessary duty. Many faculty members thought librarians should resolve this issue themselves.

Of the three responsibilities of a faculty member—teaching, research, and service to students and faculty—an overwhelming majority of faculty indicated they thought service was the most important responsibility of the librarians.

Concerning the granting of faculty status to librarians, several teaching faculty felt that the librarians' role was coequal but different: "Because the library is not a degree granting department, faculty rank and status should not be awarded"; "They should be considered administrators and have the sole purpose to serve students and teaching faculty"; "The only legitimate faculty rank for librarians would be those with crossappointment in an academic department."

One respondent indicated that in view of the publish-or-perish emphasis, research is the most significant factor and service the least for qualifying for promotion in faculty ranks. If a librarian was heavily engaged in research (as required by the university), the library services that should be rendered would go lacking. Therefore, he indicated that librarians should not be classed in faculty ranks, but should be in professional ranks.

Overall the perceptions indicated that librarians are contributing members of the university, they help in teaching, they should be conducting research and they should be given faculty rank and status for their efforts.

A replication of this study should be conducted on many campuses to help in planning local activities. In addition, comparative studies would lead to a broader knowledge of faculty attitudes toward librarians as members of the faculty. Studies of university administrations' perceptions of librarians qualifying for faculty rank and status could be conducted as well.

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APPENDIX A
FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF LIBRARIANS
AND FACULTY RANK AND STATUS FOR LIBRARIANS

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please check the appropriate response.

BACKGROUND:

1. In which school or college are you a faculty member?

<input type="checkbox"/> School of Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> School of Law
<input type="checkbox"/> College of Business and Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> School of Medicine
<input type="checkbox"/> College of Communications and Fine Arts	<input type="checkbox"/> College of Science
<input type="checkbox"/> College of Education	<input type="checkbox"/> School of Technical Careers
<input type="checkbox"/> School of Engineering and Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> College of Human Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> College of Liberal Arts	
2. What faculty rank do you hold?

<input type="checkbox"/> Full professor	<input type="checkbox"/> Assistant professor
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate professor	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor
3. How often do you use the library?

<input type="checkbox"/> Almost daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Once a month
<input type="checkbox"/> Several times a week	<input type="checkbox"/> Once a semester
<input type="checkbox"/> Once a week	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____
4. Have you ever requested a librarian to speak to one of your classes on the resources of the library?

<input type="checkbox"/> Every semester	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____
5. The contact you have had with librarians other than in the library setting has been on:

<input type="checkbox"/> Master's committees	<input type="checkbox"/> University-wide committees
<input type="checkbox"/> Ph.D. committees	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Search committees	

PERCEPTIONS:

1. How important do you view the library collection as part of your teaching and research?

<input type="checkbox"/> Indispensable	<input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance
<input type="checkbox"/> Very important	<input type="checkbox"/> Not important
<input type="checkbox"/> Important	
2. How important do you view the librarian as assisting in your teaching and research?

<input type="checkbox"/> Indispensable	<input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance
<input type="checkbox"/> Very important	<input type="checkbox"/> Not important
<input type="checkbox"/> Important	
3. Has the help you received from librarians in Morris Library been:

<input type="checkbox"/> Indispensable	<input type="checkbox"/> Of little help
<input type="checkbox"/> Very helpful	<input type="checkbox"/> Not helpful
<input type="checkbox"/> Helpful	
4. How much do you feel librarians contribute to the instruction of students in the university setting?

<input type="checkbox"/> Very substantial amount	<input type="checkbox"/> Very little
<input type="checkbox"/> Substantial amount	<input type="checkbox"/> None
<input type="checkbox"/> Some	

5. Do you feel librarians should conduct research? (Check one)
- a. On practical topics related to improving service
 - b. On scholarly library topics
 - c. Both a and b
 - d. Librarians should not conduct research
 - e. Other (Please specify) _____
6. How much released time should librarians be given to conduct research (based on a forty-hour work week)?
- 0 percent 20 percent Other (Please specify) _____
- 10 percent 30 percent
7. How do you perceive the librarian's role in the university in terms of teaching, research, and service to students and faculty? Rank the following in order of importance for librarians, 1, 2, 3, 4 (1 is high).
- Teaching Research Service to students and faculty Other _____
8. Do you view librarians as:
- Faculty equal with teaching faculty Nonprofessionals
 - Professionals Clerical and secretarial
9. Should librarians have faculty rank and status?
- Yes (If yes answer only 9a)
 - No (If no answer only 9b)
- 9a. Should there be a limit to the rank librarians may obtain?
- Yes No
- 9b. (Check appropriate responses.)
- It is due to insufficient contributions to teaching.
 - It is due to insufficient research and publications.
 - It is due to insufficient service.
 - It is due to insufficient education. (Would it matter if the professional library staff had Ph.D.'s in addition to master's degrees?) Yes No
 - All of the above
 - Other (Please specify) _____

COMMENTS: