

Statement on Faculty Status Of College and University Librarians

Drafted by a committee of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), the Association of American Colleges (AAC), and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

As the primary means through which students and faculty gain access to the storehouse of organized knowledge, the college and university library performs a unique and indispensable function in the educational process. This function will grow in importance as students assume greater responsibility for their own intellectual and social development. Indeed all members of the academic community are likely to become increasingly dependent on skilled professional guidance in the acquisition and use of library resources as the forms and numbers of these resources multiply, scholarly materials appear in more languages, bibliographical systems become more complicated, and library technology grows increasingly sophisticated. The librarian who provides such guidance plays a major role in the learning process.

The character and quality of an institution of higher learning are shaped in large measure by the nature of its library holdings and the ease and imagination with which those resources are made accessible to members of the academic community. Consequently, all members of the faculty should take an active interest in the operation and development of the library. Because the scope and character of library resources should be taken into account in such important academic decisions as curricular planning and faculty appointments, librarians should have a voice in the development of the institution's educational policy.

Librarians perform a teaching and research role inasmuch as they instruct students formally and informally and advise and assist faculty in their scholarly pursuits. Librarians are also themselves involved in the research function; many conduct research in their own professional interests and in the discharge of their duties.

Where the role of college and university librarians, as described in the preceding paragraph, requires them to function essentially as part of the faculty, this functional identity should be recognized by granting of faculty status. Neither administrative responsibilities nor professional degrees, titles, or skills, per se, qualify members of the academic community for faculty status. The *function* of the librarian as participant in the processes of teaching and research is the essential criterion of faculty status.

College and university librarians share the

professional concerns of faculty members. Academic freedom, for example, is indispensable to librarians, because they are trustees of knowledge with the responsibility of insuring the availability of information and ideas, no matter how controversial, so that teachers may freely teach and students may freely learn. Moreover, as members of the academic community, librarians should have latitude in the exercise of their professional judgment within the library, a share in shaping policy within the institution, and adequate opportunities for professional development and appropriate reward.

Faculty status entails for librarians the same rights and responsibilities as for other members of the faculty. They should have corresponding entitlement to rank, promotion, tenure, compensation, leaves, and research funds. They must go through the same process of evaluation and meet the same standards as other faculty members.¹

On some campuses, adequate procedures for extending faculty status to librarians have already been worked out. These procedures vary from campus to campus because of institutional differences. In the development of such procedures, it is essential that the general faculty or its delegated agent determine the specific steps by which any professional position is to be accorded faculty rank and status. In any case, academic positions which are to be accorded faculty rank and status should be approved by the senate or the faculty at large before submission to the president and to the governing board for approval.

With respect to library governance, it is to be presumed that the governing board, the administrative officers, the library faculty, and representatives of the general faculty, will share in the determination of library policies that affect the general interests of the institution and its educational program. In matters of internal governance, the library will operate like other academic units with respect to decisions relating to appointments, promotions, tenure, and conditions of service.²

¹Cf. 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*; 1958 *Statement on Procedural Standards in Faculty Dismissal Proceedings*; 1972 *Statement on Leaves of Absence*.

²Cf. 1966 *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*, formulated by the American Council on Education, American Association of University Professors, and Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. ■ ■