

# The Administrative Structure of the University Library

*The typical large university library is a highly decentralized structure composed of numerous divisions and/or departments and departmental libraries. The popularly accepted notion that the university library usually comprises the two divisions of technical and public services, each administered by a division head who is responsible for the coordination of all such services, is more apparent than real. There are an average of seven librarians with line authority reporting to the library director. There appears to be a need to reduce this number and to place this responsibility in two or three officers on a secondary level.*

ON DECEMBER 28, 1967, a questionnaire regarding the administrative structure of the university library was sent to the library directors of the forty-one universities with collections totalling more than one million volumes. Replies were received from thirty-nine.

A cursory analysis of the replies reveals that the "conventional" two-division structure—*i.e.*, public services and technical services—is found in twenty-two of the libraries in this study. In twelve, there are separate heads of both public and technical services. In ten libraries, there is a head with the appropriate title of either public or technical services, with the other division lacking a head who is specifically designated as such by title. In these latter cases the director or the associate director assumes the responsibility for the coordination of the division lacking a separate head.

Upon more careful analysis of the replies, it is found that in only five libraries are all the services sharply di-

vided into public and technical services, each headed by a separate officer responsible to the library director for its coordination. In another group of five libraries, the line of demarcation between public and technical services is obscured by the fact that one or more division head in each of these libraries is charged with the responsibility for supervising services of both a public and technical nature.

## "GENERAL" LIBRARY

With the exception of two institutions, a "general" or "main" library forms a part of each university library system. The public services in twenty-six of the thirty-seven "general" libraries are organized on a "traditional" basis, being made up of reference and circulation. If a third department is found, it is usually maps or documents. The remaining eleven "general" libraries are organized on the divisional plan, that is by broad subject areas. With one exception, every large "general" university library organized on the subject divisional basis maintains a centralized circulation department, and reference alone is sub-

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TABLE 1  
NUMBER OF LINE LIBRARIANS REPORTING  
TO THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Number of Libraries	Number Who Report
4	1
6	2
7	3
2	4
2	5
2	6
4	7
1	8
2	9
2	10
1	11
1	13
1	16
2	18
1	19
1	23
39	

TABLE 2  
"GENERAL" LIBRARIES ORGANIZED  
ON A DIVISIONAL BASIS

Number of Libraries	Number of Subject Divisions
2	2
5	3
3	4
1	5
11	

divided. The combination most frequently found comprises the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. If a fourth division is used, it is usually general reference. Three of the thirty-seven "general" libraries have separate heads other than the library director. In eighteen of the remaining "general" libraries, the responsibility for the coordination of services within the "general" library lies with the head of public services, in eleven with the library director, and in five libraries with the associate director.

#### UNDERGRADUATE LIBRARY

Twenty-three of the thirty-nine institutions maintain separate library facili-

ties for undergraduates, called either the college or undergraduate library. One of the sixteen not presently maintaining separate accommodations plans to do so in the immediate future. Twelve of the twenty-three undergraduate facilities are located in a building apart from the "general" library, and ten are housed within the "general" library. Two of the ten lacking separate quarters plan to relocate within such a building. Several institutions with undergraduate libraries have renamed the "general" library as the research library. Ten institutions maintain separate storage libraries apart from any form of cooperative storage housed within its own building on campus, and five university libraries maintain substantial storage facilities that form a part of another building apart from the "general" library.

#### DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARIES

The number of departmental and professional school libraries forming a part

TABLE 3  
DEPARTMENTAL AND PROFESSIONAL  
SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Number of Universities	Number of Depart- mental Libraries
1	0
1	1
1	2
2	6
2	7
4	8
1	9
2	10
2	11
3	12
3	14
3	15
2	16
1	19
2	20
1	22
1	24
2	25
1	27
1	46
1	60
39	

of the university library system ranges from none to sixty. The average number of departmental libraries is almost fourteen, and the median is twelve. In four institutions the responsibility for their coordination is placed in a supervisor of departmental libraries. Three of the four departmental library supervisors report to the library director and head a division of stature equal to that of public services, and one reports to the head of public services. In twenty-two of the remaining thirty-four institutions, the responsibility for the coordination of the departmental libraries has been placed in one of the following officers:

NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS	OFFICER
11 . . . . .	Head of public services
7 . . . . .	Library director
3 . . . . .	Associate or assistant director
1 . . . . .	Head of public services

In the other twelve libraries there is no officer who is responsible for the coordination of departmental libraries. In nine of the twelve institutions, this responsibility is exercised by two of the above named officers and in three universities, no attempt is made to coordinate the departmental libraries.

In eleven of the thirty-nine institutions, the responsibility for the coordination of the science libraries is placed in an officer other than the one who is responsible for the coordination of the non-science libraries. All public services in two libraries are divided between science and non-science, each of which is administered by a division head. In the remaining nine institutions, the responsibility for the coordination of the various departmental libraries within the scientific disciplines is vested in the science librarian. None of the nine science librarians report to the head of public services. Rather, seven of the

nine report to the library director and two to the associate director.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

With the exception of one university library, each has one or more divisions, departmental libraries, and/or departments within the "general" library devoted to rare books and/or special collections. The librarian in charge of these collections is more likely to report to

TABLE 4  
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF RARE BOOKS AND/OR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Number of Universities	Structure
3 . . . . .	Division reporting to director
21 . . . . .	Department reporting to director
9 . . . . .	Department reporting to head of public services
1 . . . . .	Department reporting to departmental library supervisor
4 . . . . .	Part of "general" library
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38	

the library director than to the head of public services.

The replies show that in only ten of the thirty-nine universities forming the basis of this study the coordination of all public services is centralized in a single officer other than the library director—nine in the head of public services and one in the associate director. In the remaining twenty-nine institutions, there is no one person other than the library director charged with the responsibility for the coordination of public services. Heads of departments in the "general" library and departmental librarians often report to the library director rather than to an officer on a secondary level. In many university libraries, the number of line librarians reporting to the library director or to the

head of public services is extremely large. The question might properly be raised whether it is possible for one officer to coordinate with any degree of success the numerous units forming the public services division of the library.

#### TECHNICAL SERVICES

The technical services division of the typical large university library consists of two or three departments. Almost always found within this division are acquisitions and cataloging departments.

TABLE 5  
NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS WITHIN  
TECHNICAL SERVICES

Number of University Libraries	Number of Departments
15	2
11	3
9	4
4	5
39	

Separate serials departments have been established in seventeen libraries. They are almost as frequently responsible only for the acquisition of serials as for both their acquisition and cataloging. In twenty-five libraries all ordering is centralized within acquisitions and/or serials, and in fourteen libraries it is not. In twenty-one libraries all cataloging is centralized in a similar manner within

TABLE 6  
FUNCTION(S) OF SERIALS DEPARTMENT  
ESTABLISHED AS A SEPARATE ENTITY WITHIN  
TECHNICAL SERVICES

Number of University Libraries	Function
8	Acquisition
7	Acquisition and Cataloging
1	Cataloging
1	No reply
17	

technical services, and in eighteen libraries it is not. Certain professional school and departmental libraries, such as law, medicine, and Near and Far Eastern languages frequently do their own ordering and cataloging. One library reports that the responsibility for cataloging within technical services is divided between two departments on the basis of the ease of cataloging. One department is responsible for original cataloging, and the other department catalogs those materials for which LC proofsheets or cards are available. In but ten of the thirty-nine libraries included within this study does there appear to be a high degree of centralization within the technical services division by concentrating the responsibility for the acquisition and cataloging of all materials regardless of form within the two corresponding departments. In the typical large university library this responsibility is decentralized to varying degrees by placing a part of it within a third or even a fourth department within technical services or within one or more of the professional school or departmental libraries or special collections.

Gifts and exchange is almost without exception a part of acquisitions. As a

TABLE 7  
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF  
GIFTS AND EXCHANGE

Number of University Libraries	Structure
33	Section of Acquisitions
2	Separate Department
1	Section of Cataloging
1	Section of Serials
1	Section of Bibliographical Unit
1	Section of both Serials and Acquisitions
39	

rule, binding is a section of another department within technical services—most frequently acquisitions. Binding may also be a section within serials or a separate department within technical services. Only seven libraries report that the binding section is responsible for the actual physical binding of books and serials. One of the seven does all its own binding, not using an outside bindery for at least a part of its work. In nineteen of the thirty-nine libraries, there is an officer other than the library director responsible for the coordination

TABLE 8  
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF  
BINDING/BINDERY

Number of University Libraries	Structure
15	Section of acquisitions
9	Separate department
8	Section of serials
5	Section of cataloging
1	Separate department including photoduplication
1	Sections of both acquisitions and serials
39	

of the various departments making up the technical services division of the library, and, in twenty libraries, there is no such officer other than the director himself. Probably because of the fact that technical services consists of fewer departments, and because the nature of technical services requires or lends itself to a higher degree of centralization, technical services appears less likely to be decentralized than public services.

STAFF OFFICERS

In an attempt to reduce the number of staff functions being performed by the heads of public and technical services who are primarily line officers, and to place the responsibility for the performance of staff functions common to

all divisions of the library in a "neutral" officer who is an expert in the performance of that task, numerous libraries have established staff positions with functions which are limited to a narrow, specialized area. Two areas in which this has occurred most often are automation and personnel. Twenty-six libraries report having a staff officer who is responsible for automation. Four of the twenty-six hold the rank of an associate director heading a division of stature equal to public and technical services. Of the remaining twenty-two, nine hold the rank of a department head, and thirteen that of a special assistant. Twenty of the twenty-six officers in charge of automation hold a library degree, while six do not. Nine of the thirteen libraries without a specialist in automation have placed this additional responsibility upon a librarian who already has substantial responsibilities in another area—most frequently an associate or assistant director. Only four libraries have no one on their staff who is specially charged with this responsibility.

Eighteen libraries have personnel officers. Four of the eighteen occupy positions of an assistant director, of whom two head divisions responsible not only for personnel but also for general administration. They are of stature equal to public and technical services. The remaining fourteen may be classified as personnel librarians or as special administrative assistants in charge of personnel. Six of the latter group do not hold library degrees, and three have responsibilities which are limited to non-professional staff members. All the others have library degrees.

SUMMARY

The typical large university library therefore is a highly decentralized structure composed of numerous divisions and/or departments. Often no clear demarcation exists in the organizational

structure between services of a public and technical nature. In addition to these two divisions, third and even fourth divisions may be found with responsibility for administration, book selection, automation, departmental libraries, rare books, or special collections.

At the heart of the university library system is a "general" library, the public services of which are most frequently organized on the traditional basis of reference and circulation. Separate facilities are often provided for the undergraduate in the form of a college or an undergraduate library, housed either within the "general" library or in a separate building. The average number of departmental libraries in the universities represented in this survey is fourteen.

In comparison to the public services division, technical services is a smaller and a more compact division consisting

of two or three departments. Cataloging and acquisitions are almost always found, and less frequently, serials. Gifts and exchange is generally a part of acquisitions. Nearly every large university library has on its staff an automation specialist, and many also have specialists in personnel.

Other than the library director, there are seldom two or three officers on a secondary level in whom the coordination of all services within the library is centralized. Rather, this responsibility is scattered among numerous officers. In most cases, there are too many librarians with line authority who are reporting to the library director. There appears to be a definite need to reduce the number of such officers who are reporting to the director and to place this responsibility within officers on a secondary level. ■ ■

