

Trends Affecting Community College Library Administrators

A national survey of chief administrators in the library-learning resource centers of public comprehensive community colleges reveals they are assuming a new expanded role in a total program. With new titles, indicating affiliation with a unit broader than a library, they are becoming educational technologists for individual and curricular instruction, assisting in teaching strategies, and becoming involved in new areas, such as design and production, graphics, and electronics.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE library-learning resource directors are assuming a new role, not only for the administration of library material in all forms, but in providing a learning environment and assisting instructors with multiple teaching strategies. They are becoming more than librarians; their positions have taken on new dimensions.

To probe those individuals in this new role, a national survey was designed in 1972 to elicit information concerning certain characteristics of the library-learning resource directors and to identify their positions in the administrative hierarchy. The study was limited to the chief administrators of the centers, or programs, in public comprehensive community colleges. It was restricted to community colleges with transfer, occupational, and continuing education programs; therefore, two-year colleges with only one program, whether transfer or occupational, were omitted. Private colleges were also omitted, as were technical schools and military schools.

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Many two-year branches of state universities did not fulfill the criteria of typical public comprehensive community colleges, and so all junior colleges controlled by universities were eliminated as well. A questionnaire, as the data gathering instrument, was sent to the population of 586 institutions meeting the criteria. Responses were received from 465 libraries (79.4 percent), and of the total population 75.9 percent furnished usable data for analysis.

TITLE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

The concept of the library-learning resource center is so new that no uniform terminology has been adopted. Terms describing the chief administrator indicate affiliation of the library with instruction, learning centers, or audiovisual programs. Embryonic terminology leans toward identification with instruction, including often the designation "learning" or "instruction." The word used to describe the person in charge of the center, or program, shows that the individual is a "director" or a "coordinator" rather than merely a librarian. Administrative function is implicit, and in some cases campus-wide involvement is recognized.

Those with the actual title "director

of learning resources" accounted for 20.8 percent of the population; deans and coordinators of learning resources contributed the small percentages of 3.8 and 2.1 respectively. Slightly more than 14 percent had other learning resource titles. A total of 41.2 percent had titles that indicated association with a library-learning resource center or a facility with a similar designation. Although there is uncertainty in the adaptation of any one new title, some dissatisfaction with the term "library" is implicit in the frequent rejection of that terminology in favor of new designations.

These titles indicate a struggle with the nomenclature itself. The debatable terms were so changeable that they differed between the issuance of the new AAJC-ACRL "Guidelines" in January 1972 and the revision of those "Guidelines" accepted in June of that same year, from library-learning resource center to learning resource center.^{1,2} The American Association of Junior Colleges³ and the Association of College and Research Libraries had collaborated on the first draft. The later revision included contributions from the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, in addition to those from the other two organizations.

In the shift toward description of the unit as something broader than a library, the title "director of library services" accounted for nearly a third (31.1 percent) of the respondents. This title, including the words "library services," implied more than a traditional library—there is a slight bending of the more rigid term. Although directors of the newly emerging centers have diverse titles, traditional libraries do remain, with librarians as chief administrators. The title "library director" or "librarian" was reported by 27.7 percent, although some of those had integrated centers.

In Fritz Veit's contribution to a 1964

study, there was no doubt that the title "librarian" remained the most popular professional designation, as there were but few other designations, almost all including the term "library."⁴ The same author in his 1975 volume, *The Community College Library*, however, emphasized the present lack of uniformity.⁵ A survey of junior colleges in the 1960s indicated that the trend is toward a combined media department and library, thus creating a learning resource center or an instructional materials center;⁶ and another study described an integrated complex, a new academic phenomenon, called a "learning center" with library and nonbook resources operating together under centralized administration.⁷

EXPERIENCE AND CHARACTERISTICS

Of those in charge of these library-learning resource programs, described as new phenomena, almost half (47.9 percent) have been in their positions from two to five years, while slightly more than 10 percent were new to the position, having served one year or less. About a fourth (25.5 percent) had from six to ten years of experience in current positions. Sixteen percent were veterans of more than ten years, although only 5 percent had been in their positions twenty years or more.

A contributing factor to the finding that more than half had been in their positions five years or less could be that the public community colleges developed and expanded at a very rapid rate during the decade of the 1960s and into the 1970s. With fifty or more new institutions chartered during some years, staff members had been recruited only recently.

The current directors have had previous experience as librarians. The shift to integrated centers with instructional involvement suggests that these former librarians have had to adapt to the expanded concept of library service. Prior

to taking their present positions, 69.7 percent had been librarians, with 3 percent of those indicating that they had audiovisual responsibility as well. A small percentage (7.9 percent) had been employed in a learning resource center previously. Five percent had been audiovisual specialists or media specialists. Fewer than 10 percent had been teachers; and other prior positions (primarily in education) accounted for only 8 percent, including academic administrators, professors of educational administration, curriculum specialists, superintendents of schools, and specialists in learning laboratories and in communications. Very few came from outside the educational sphere, such as business, industry, or the military. Other studies also have shown the predominance of the field of education for prior experience, particularly that of teaching.^{8, 9}

The early association of the public junior colleges with secondary education would lead one to believe that prior experience might actually have been on the secondary school level.¹⁰ However, previous experience was gained in the secondary school by less than a third (29.5 percent) of the population. Higher education was the level of experience for 47.4 percent of the respondents. Those already in the junior college area accounted for 23.7 percent; 11.1 percent came from four-year colleges; and 12.6 percent had prior experience in universities.

Although the area of vocational and technical education is emphasized in the junior college, less than 1 percent had come from technical schools. Slightly more than 22 percent had prior experience in elementary schools, public and special libraries, and other areas. In an earlier study the prediction was made that, as the junior college becomes more distinct, it is probable that previous experience will be college library experience rather than school library experience.¹¹ The current trend would tend

to support this forecast. With the chief administrator of the library being college or university oriented, the junior college becomes more closely allied with higher education.

To determine the personal characteristics of the current administrators directing these centers, data were sought concerning sex and age. Of the chief library-learning resource administrators, 62.6 percent were male, and 37.4 percent were female. In other studies of academic librarians, women predominate in staff positions; however, men are frequently found in the administrative positions.

In a 1970 study of academic library administrators, including but not limited to those in two-year institutions, approximately nine-tenths were male, as opposed to slightly more than one-tenth female.¹² A study of personal characteristics of academic librarians indicated that very nearly two-thirds of the academic librarians were women; relatively more of the men, 21.6 percent versus 11.8 percent of the women, were chief librarians.¹³ Findings in the present investigation agree with the trends expressed in prior studies in which there is male predominance in administrative positions. A 1973 study of community college librarians, most of whom were in staff positions, reported a reverse ratio of 61.7 percent females and 38.3 percent males.¹⁴

In the present investigation, directors in these positions are shown to be middle-aged. The modal age bracket of respondents was 40-49. It might have been expected that young men with knowledge of new techniques would have been sought for innovative programs in new institutions; however, mature men with prior experience are directors of library-learning resource centers.

An overwhelming majority find job satisfaction in these positions. While 94.3 percent agreed that the position was satisfying, less than 6 percent ex-

pressed dissatisfaction. This is a smaller percentage than that of Schiller's study, in which 11 percent of the academic librarians reported that they were disappointed in their work.¹⁵

Current directors accept the integrated concept of library-learning resource programs, with 95.9 percent agreeing with the concept. On an adaptation of the Likert scale, 66.6 percent, or two-thirds, expressed strong agreement. A very low percentage (4.1) indicated some degree of disillusionment with integration. Present-day emphasis is on the centralized administration of all types of material.

The 1972 "Guidelines" used the terminology "center" until the revision of those "Guidelines" six months later, at which time "program" replaced the former term in the document. The most noticeable change since the 1960 Standards, shown in the new "Guidelines" (including the revision), was the increased emphasis on the administrative unification of print and audiovisual services.

In the present study a number of respondents indicated that, although administered as an integrated unit, library and audiovisual services were not in the same location. In the single organizational function, three-fourths (75.5 percent) replied in the affirmative that the department consists of library and audiovisual services administered as an integrated unit. During 1972 a survey of community college construction revealed that various combinations of library, audiovisual, learning laboratory, reprographics, and skills centers formed learning resource centers in the new architectural arrangements.¹⁶

DUTIES

In programs with the expanded, integrated concept, administrators face problems broader than usual library management problems. They estimate that a higher percentage of time is

spent in administrative duties than in other areas. More than half of their time (59.6 percent) is devoted to administration, with 11 percent reporting that all of their time was so allocated. Administrative duties require a broad range of competence in decision-making, directing, fiscal planning, budgeting, staffing, coordinating, and communicating, as well as personnel management.

As staff expands, administrative responsibility grows. While few supervise large numbers of people, most have some supervisory responsibility. The revised "Guidelines" state that all personnel should be considered for employment on the recommendation of the director, with the advice of the center staff or unit head. The current directors do have primary responsibility for selecting new staff members in 86.2 percent of the centers. In the area of budgeting, 91.3 percent have primary responsibility for the library budget, while 71.4 percent have responsibility for the audiovisual budget.

Audiovisual Services

The trend toward integrated centers with provision for audiovisual services has necessitated involvement of directors in the supervision of routines not heretofore considered a part of library service. There are new functions in graphics sections, electronics sections, photographic laboratories, and production design centers. Nevertheless, little time is estimated as being spent on audiovisual services, with only 6.5 percent so allocated. Of the centers polled, more than 90 percent have holdings in slides, records, filmstrips, audio tape, and microforms; 74.2 percent own films; 83.2 percent have transparencies; and 69.5 percent have acquired videotape. Self-instructional carrels with media outlets were available in 64.6 percent of the institutions.

Other respondents volunteered information that carrels were in the process

of being built or were on the drawing board. Wet carrels are equipped in many institutions with dial access, audio, and visual capabilities. Here the library-learning resource staff, under the direction of the administrator, provides a place for learners to proceed at their own rates, allowing for differences in intelligence, motivation, and persistence.

Teaching

When consideration is given to the role of the library-learning resource director in providing the learning environment, it can be assumed that the librarian, instead of actually teaching, is involved in expanding instructional techniques as an instructional technologist. By their own declaration, respondents consider that 6.7 percent of their time is devoted to teaching, with 4.5 percent devoted to informal instruction and 2.2 percent to formal course work.

They do not indicate a preference for increasing their teaching duties measurably. Seventy-eight percent do not wish to devote any time to formal teaching, and 95 percent would prefer to spend less than 10 percent of their time on course work. In an earlier study, it was shown that librarians feared that their teaching role might actually become submerged in the administrative aspects of their jobs.¹⁷ If it is assumed that the small percentage of time reported in teaching is accurate, then the concern expressed may, in fact, have been realized.

Library-learning resource directors, rather than imparting knowledge, arrange an educational setting and provide motivation so that learning can take place. Major current trends in instruction include self-instruction and individualization of instruction, supporting the philosophy of individual differences. To the extent that the college makes use of the library-learning resource center as an integral part of

the curricular program, the learning center becomes a teaching instrument.

Design and Production

The new concept of the library-learning resources program allows for the production of materials for curricular and individual needs. The revised "Guidelines" state that materials are selected, acquired, designed, or produced on the basis of institutional and instructional objectives. They state, further, that materials may be acquired and made available from a variety of sources, among which are listed the facility for design and production of materials not readily available. Production activities may include graphics, photography, cinematography, audio and video recording, and preparation of printed materials.

These are new concepts for library-oriented personnel; however, 72.1 percent indicated that production is provided, at least to some degree. While some reported that design and production were on a limited scale, many were encouraging this new involvement with materials.

Technical Processes

In addition to the time spent on administrative duties, audiovisual, teaching, and production, the directors spend 12 percent of their time on technical processes, which would include acquiring and organizing the collection. Time spent in processing is lessened in 23 percent of the institutions which reported that their materials were received pre-processed by a commercial or other agency. The current trend is in direct opposition to direct involvement with cataloging. A decade earlier, nearly three-quarters of the junior college head librarians did the actual cataloging in addition to other duties.¹⁸ As early as 1935 a report on junior college trends suggested that technical processes be

scanned for possible curtailment.¹⁹

Current directors indicated that they would prefer to spend less time than they actually spend on technical services. A number of directors indicated that they were in the process of changing from Dewey to Library of Congress classification. With 56.4 percent organizing according to Library of Congress and 42.9 percent under Dewey Decimal, classification is changing in the direction of Library of Congress. This is a new trend since the study which reported that Dewey was almost overwhelmingly preferred.²⁰

The present study determined that many local schemes with accession numbers were used for audiovisual materials, although 21.5 percent classified nonprint under Dewey and 22.5 percent according to Library of Congress. A few used the indexes of the National Information Center for Educational Media as guides to arrangement. Books and audiovisual materials were recorded in a central coordinated or union catalog in more than two-thirds (67.2 percent) of the institutions.

Public Services

The amount of time estimated as spent in public services is 11.1 percent, and the directors would prefer to increase that amount slightly. Additional time is devoted to work with the public in faculty liaison, curriculum development and planning, committee work, public relations, and meetings. Time spent in curricular development indicates that the library-learning resource director is taking on the responsibility of keeping informed concerning curricular matters and being alert to support through materials.

Directors were represented, either personally or by staff, on the curriculum committee in 71.6 percent of the institutions. This is an increase in the percentage of directors represented on the com-

mittee when compared with Wheeler's study which reported approximately one-third serving on the curriculum committee.²¹ This new frequency of service on the committee points further to the role of directors regarding instructional involvement. Knapp's study had revealed comments from teaching faculty that did not identify the librarian as a fellow curriculum builder, but rather as one who merely reported holdings.²²

REPORTING AND LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY

There is recognition of the teaching-learning instructional function of the library-learning resource center by fact of the line of reporting. The changing trend in the administrative hierarchy is that of direct reporting to the dean of instruction. More than half (58.7 percent) of the directors indicated that they report to the dean of instruction, and another 10 percent report to other deans, with 11.5 percent reporting to the president and 13.3 percent to the vice-president. An unusual line of reporting is noted by a small group (2.4 percent) who report to the president and the dean; 4.1 percent report to "others."

This information reveals a change in the administrative hierarchy since Wheeler's study in which more than half of the community college library directors in the sample described themselves as responsible to their college presidents, with just over one-fourth reporting to deans.²³ Moore, in a recent study, found 64 percent of the library directors reporting to the academic dean.²⁴ He pointed out that the position of the head librarian stands relatively high in the structure of the American public community college.²⁵

Veit has expressed concern that learning resource programs might not achieve the necessary close contact with the instructional program unless the director

of the library reports to the college officer in charge of academic affairs.²⁶ Findings of the present study show the director of library-learning resources in a position of direct reporting to the dean of instruction, thereby linking the learning resource program with instruction.

These library-learning resource chief administrators should have rank and titles identical to those of the teaching staff, according to the 1960 Standards. The 1972 "Guidelines" expanded this statement into a standard expressing the fact that the chief administrator of the center should have the same administrative rank and status as others with similar institution-wide responsibilities. More than 80 percent of the current directors are accorded faculty status; rank was not surveyed. The "Guidelines" stress the obligation to meet professional requirements, such as advanced study, research, and committee work. An actual poll of two-year college learning resource centers in one state showed that the responsibility for advanced study, research, and publication was required in very few cases.²⁷

CONCLUSION

The chief administrator of the library-learning resource center or program has had to adjust to a new philosophy, a new role, from that of a keeper of materials to a dispenser of curriculum materials, to analyst and designer of instructional systems with a concern for planning a learning environment. The role of the director has assumed broader dimensions than heretofore in expanded libraries with new names, viewed now as omni-media centers, with audiovisual responsibilities in a total program supporting new methods of teaching, different types of students, and diverse curricula.

Although the director's time spent in actual teaching is minimal, his or her role is closely allied to that of instruction in providing the learning environment with appropriate materials of all types for the individualization of instruction. The majority of the directors agree with the integrated media concept and derive satisfaction in their positions. They have reached a new level of professionalism directly involved with individual and classroom learning.

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