

The Faculty Status of Academic Librarians in Ohio

This article summarizes a survey conducted among academic library directors in Ohio to determine the extent to which librarians in institutions of higher education in Ohio have achieved faculty status as defined by the ACRL Standards. The survey revealed: (1) very few academic librarians in Ohio have full faculty status as defined in the ACRL Standards; (2) of the nine standards mandated by the ACRL only four are met by more than half of the institutions in Ohio; and (3) the degree to which academic librarians in Ohio have the "rights and responsibilities" of faculty status varies by certain demographic characteristics of the respondents.

A SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED in June 1979 as part of a doctoral dissertation¹ to determine the faculty status of academic librarians in institutions of higher education in Ohio. The library directors of all fifty-five accredited colleges and universities in Ohio that offer at least a B.A. were contacted. Forty-five surveys were returned. The current interest and concern of academic library directors with this topic is evident by their responses to the survey. The fact that 82 percent of the library directors completed the survey, many with appended comments, indicates the significance of this issue in their minds.

Five research questions concerning the degree to which academic librarians in Ohio have faculty status were analyzed from the data received from the survey. How many academic librarians have full faculty status as defined by the ACRL Standards for Faculty Status for College and University Librarians and how such status is affected by size or control of the institution, the highest degree offered, the number of volumes in the library, and the number of professional librarians are issues investigated. Responses were analyzed by: (1) en-

rollment; (2) control of the institution; (3) highest degree offered; (4) number of volumes in the library; and (5) number of professional librarians.

The questions in the survey were based on the nine standards for faculty status developed and approved by the membership of the Association of College and Research Libraries. Adopted in 1971, this document lists nine standards for determining a librarian's academic status. In all cases the basic requirement is equality with the teaching faculty. The standards enumerated by ACRL are accepted by the library profession, are well defined, and accurately compare with the rights and responsibilities normally given members of the teaching faculty.

Ohio was selected because of the wide diversity of institutions within the state's system of higher education. The state includes a large and representative number of institutions of higher education that vary greatly in size and the highest degree offered. The state system of twelve institutions is also supplemented by more than forty privately controlled colleges and universities. Finally, the size and staffing of the libraries at the various academic institutions in Ohio vary widely.

Responses to this survey were well distributed among these diverse institutions

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within the state of Ohio (see table 1). Public, religious, and independent colleges and universities each accounted for 22 percent, and independent/religious institutions constituted the remaining 34 percent. A distinction was made between those institutions with direct and strong religious ties and controls (religious) and those founded by religious denominations but now only loosely affiliated with a church group (independent/religious). All sizes of libraries and library staffs were represented in the responses, and institutions of various enrollments are included in the results. Colleges and universities with enrollments of 500-3,000 made up 69 percent of the responses.

Many previous studies have considered the status of academic librarians, but often

with regard to only one demographic variable, e.g., publicly, privately, or religiously controlled institutions² or medium-sized, large, or major research libraries.³ One state survey was conducted in 1978 by the Texas Library Association's College and University Libraries Division's ad hoc Academic Status Committee that was based, "in part," on the ACRL *Standards*.⁴ However, the lack of standardized definition of academic status prior to the ACRL *Standards* has made comparisons between earlier studies very difficult. This study not only applies the exact criteria established by the ACRL *Standards* to determine the present status of academic librarians in Ohio but also considers how an institution's size, control, highest degree offered, and library statistics affect this status.

TABLE 1
CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

	Number of Institutions	Percentage
<i>Enrollment</i>		
Under 500	1	2
500-1,000	15	33
1,000-3,000	16	36
3,000-6,000	3	7
6,000-10,000	1	2
10,000-15,000	4	9
15,000-20,000	4	9
20,000-25,000	0	0
Over 25,000	1	2
<i>Type of control</i>		
Public	10	22
Religious	10	22
Independent/religious	15	33
Independent	10	22
<i>Highest degree offered</i>		
Baccalaureate	27	60
Master's	9	20
Doctorate	9	20
<i>Volumes in the library</i>		
Under 25,000	2	4.5
25,000-50,000	1	2
50,000-100,000	13	29
100,000-250,000	13	29
250,000-500,000	7	16
500,000-750,000	2	4.5
750,000-1,000,000	1	2
Over 1,000,000	6	13
<i>Professional librarians</i>		
1-2	8	18
3-5	17	38
6-10	9	20
11-15	2	4.5
16-20	4	9
21-25	2	4.5
Over 25	3	7

FINDINGS

Responses by library directors indicated that only slightly more than half (twenty-five out of forty-four) of the college and universities in Ohio are judged to grant faculty status, as defined by the ACRL, to their librarians. However, larger institutions with correspondingly larger libraries are more likely to offer faculty status to librarians. For institutions with enrollments of more than six thousand students, 75 percent grant some faculty status. Public colleges and universities are also more likely to provide faculty status, as are institutions that offer the doctorate.

Only eleven of the twenty-five institutions credited with granting faculty status provide librarians with all of the benefits accorded the teaching faculty. The remainder provide "most" of the benefits given to the teaching faculty. Religious colleges and universities are much less likely to grant all of these benefits; in contrast to the 50 percent of other types of institutions that grant full benefits, only 20 percent of religious institutions provide these benefits.

Library directors were asked to judge the satisfaction of their professional staff with their current status. Most directors (75 percent) indicated general satisfaction among their professional librarians with their current status. Possibly because they are more likely to have at least nominal faculty status, professional staffs at public institutions that

grant doctorates were judged satisfied by 90 percent of their directors, whereas the overall satisfaction rate was 75 percent. Similarly, librarians at larger institutions (with more than six thousand students) were considered satisfied with their current status by 90 percent of the library directors.

Although most questions in the survey necessitated purely factual responses, this question relating to the degree of current staff satisfaction required the expression of an opinion. In this instance, the possibility of bias or lack of knowledge may have been an obfuscating factor. This must be considered in evaluating the results. The responses, however, do clearly indicate that most academic directors in Ohio believe their professional staffs are satisfied with their current status.

Directors also were asked if they favored full faculty status, which includes all of the benefits and responsibilities normally given to the teaching faculty, for the members of their professional staffs. Thirty (70 percent) indicated they did and twenty-five (61 percent) also believed their professional staffs favored such full faculty status. However, since only twenty-five institutions even nominally grant faculty status, it appears that many directors and librarians who favor full faculty status do not have it.

Libraries of religious colleges and universities and institutions whose highest degree is the master's are typically administered by directors who favor full faculty status (78 percent). However, librarians at these institutions are not viewed as favoring faculty status to the same extent as their directors. While 78 percent of the library directors at colleges and universities that offer MA degrees as their highest degree favor full faculty status, only 33 percent of their staffs are judged by these directors to favor such status. Generally, however, the support of the librarians for faculty status approximates that of the directors within similar sizes and types of institutions. For example, 56 percent of the directors at institutions with more than ten thousand students favored full faculty status, and an equal 56 percent believed their staffs favored such status.

A critical element in determining faculty status is whether librarians are given academic titles such as "professor" or

"associate professor." In Ohio such academic rank is held by librarians at only 50 percent of the institutions. Some (19 percent) are given equivalent rank, e.g., "Librarian I" or "Librarian II." Titles reflecting job descriptions, e.g., "cataloger" or "reference librarian," account for the remaining 31 percent of the responses. Larger, public institutions that offer the doctorate account for many of the colleges and universities that grant academic rank and titles to librarians. Equivalent or descriptive titles are most frequently used at smaller institutions with smaller libraries.

The ACRL *Standards* details nine points to be considered in judging the extent to which academic librarians have faculty status. The first of these is "professional responsibilities and self-determination." This standard recommends the regular review of each librarian's performance and states that "a necessary element of this review must be appraisal by a committee of peers who have access to all available evidence."⁵ Only ten library directors indicated that the annual review of each of their librarians included an evaluation by a committee of peers. A significant number (77 percent) specified that no review by peers was undertaken.

The second standard for faculty status presented by the ACRL deals with library governance and states:

College and university libraries should adopt an academic form of governance. The librarians should form as a library faculty whose role and authority is similar to that of the faculties of a college, or the faculty of a school or a department.⁶

However, only fourteen libraries (36 percent) surveyed have an academic form of governance similar to that of the faculties of other academic departments. Significantly, most of the library directors (68 percent) who did not have academic governance in their libraries indicated that they did not want it. This was especially true of directors at public universities and those institutions that grant the doctorate.

Another aspect of library governance is the election of department heads by the members of the professional staff. In only two libraries are department heads or coordinators of units within the library elected by members of the unit. The overwhelming

majority of libraries (95 percent) do not have such elections.

The ACRL *Standards* also stipulates that librarians as part of the faculty should be "... eligible for membership in the academic senate or equivalent body at their college or university on the same basis as other faculty."⁷ While most academic librarians in Ohio are allowed to serve on the faculty senate or its equivalent body at their institutions, this is another criterion for faculty status that is greatly influenced by demographic factors. This right is primarily reserved for those librarians at larger, public, graduate colleges and universities. For example, only 50 percent of the religious and 70 percent of the independent institutions permit librarians to serve, but 90 percent of the public universities do make librarians eligible for membership.

In a similar fashion, librarians at smaller, private institutions are less likely to serve on the faculty senate, even if they are eligible. Religious colleges and universities have only a 20 percent rate of current service, as opposed to 89 percent for public institutions. In general, however, most libraries (66 percent) eligible for membership currently have at least one member in office. Given the opportunity librarians seem to participate actively in college and university governance.

The related issue of membership on faculty committees produced similar results. Membership on faculty committees is nearly universally available for academic librarians in Ohio. Forty library directors (91 percent) indicated that librarians on their staffs are allowed to serve on college and university committees. Again, eligible librarians at all institutions, regardless of size or control, actively serve on college or university committees.

One of the most controversial issues in faculty status involves compensation. The ACRL *Standards* states, "The salary scale for librarians should be the same as that for other academic categories with equivalent education and experience."⁸ Salaries of Ohio academic librarians are lower than those of the teaching faculty in 54 percent of the institutions surveyed. This disparity is most evident in religious colleges and universities. Only one such institution provides

librarians with salaries equal to those of the teaching faculty. Institutions granting the master's degree are also very likely to pay librarians less. Enrollment and size of the institution's library do not seem to have a direct effect on the salaries paid to librarians.

The ACRL *Standards* also stresses the need for an academic-year contract. However, only one college in Ohio currently appoints its librarians to nine-month contracts. Forty-one libraries (93 percent) require librarians to sign twelve-month contracts. Two other institutions offer ten-month contracts. For those librarians whose contract is for twelve months the normal vacation given is four weeks. Librarians at most institutions (86 percent) are also required to work occasionally on administrative holidays when classes have been canceled without receiving any special compensation or consideration for this duty.

Librarians should also be eligible for tenure like other faculty members and, according to the ACRL *Standards*, the requirements should be the same as those of the teaching faculty. The eligibility of academic librarians for tenure varies dramatically among the colleges and universities within Ohio. Overall statistics show that 48 percent are eligible for tenure. However, 90 percent of the public institutions offer tenure to librarians, whereas only 30 percent of the religious and independent colleges and universities do. Larger institutions and libraries are much more likely to provide tenure to librarians. Institutions with doctoral programs similarly make librarians eligible for tenure in most cases (89 percent). Also, the requirements for determining tenure for librarians are the same as those for the faculty at only twelve of the twenty institutions where librarians are eligible for tenure.

As members of the faculty, librarians should also be promoted to higher ranks on the same basis as the teaching faculty. The ACRL *Standards* stipulates, "The librarians' promotion ladder should have the same titles, ranks, and steps as that of other faculty."⁹ Academic librarians in Ohio are much more likely to be evaluated for promotion by the same process and judged by the same criteria as the teaching faculty if they are employed by large, public colleges

and universities. Such faculty promotion procedures are followed by 75 percent of the public institutions, but at less than 40 percent of the religious and independent colleges and universities. Overall, sixteen library staffs (42 percent) are evaluated for promotion by the same standards as the teaching faculty, but at twenty-two institutions (58 percent) this is not true. In the cases where the same promotion criteria are used, 86 percent of the library directors agree that this is fair.

Library directors were also asked if their library had a written promotion policy and, if it did, whether the policy had been approved by the institution's administration. Few libraries had promotion policies, but those that did usually had had it approved by the administration. Libraries in larger, publicly controlled institutions are also somewhat more likely to have a written promotion policy. While 60 percent of the libraries in public institutions have such policies, less than 15 percent of the religious or independent schools have them. Several library directors indicated that they were required to apply the general university promotion policy to members of their professional staffs.

The ACRL *Standards* specifies that sabbaticals and other research leaves and research funds should be ". . . available to librarians on the same basis, and with the same requirements as they are available to other faculty."¹⁰ This is true for academic librarians in Ohio with regard to travel funds, but not for sabbaticals or research funds. All libraries at institutions whose faculty were eligible for travel funds provided such funds to professional librarians. Librarians at 81 percent of these libraries had received such funds within the past two years. Only 49 percent of the libraries whose institutions offered sabbaticals to members of the teaching faculty provided librarians with similar opportunities. Also, only 58 percent of the libraries made research funds available.

A smaller percentage of sabbaticals and research funds was actually received by librarians at institutions where they were available. Sabbaticals had been given within the past two years to librarians at only nine (41 percent) of the twenty-two colleges and

universities where they were theoretically available to librarians. Research funds were actually distributed at only ten (38 percent) of the twenty-six eligible libraries.

The last standard adopted by ACRL concerns academic freedom. An overwhelming majority of Ohio academic library directors believed their staffs have the same degree of academic freedom as the teaching faculty. Only four (9 percent) disagreed and thought librarians at their institutions were lacking in academic freedom. Thirty-nine (91 percent), on the other hand, would agree that librarians on their staffs have the academic freedom traditionally given to the teaching faculty.

The ACRL *Standards* details the specific "rights and privileges" that academic librarians are entitled to if they have full faculty status. However, the ACRL's "Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians" points out that faculty status for librarians carries with it not only the rights but also the same responsibilities as for members of the teaching faculty. It stipulates that librarians ". . . must go through the same process of evaluation and meet the same standards as other faculty members."¹¹ These responsibilities include professional service, research and publication, and additional graduate degrees. Several questions in the survey investigated the extent to which Ohio academic librarians are meeting these responsibilities and the problems they must overcome to do so.

A substantial number of librarians at most academic libraries in Ohio are members of both the state and national professional library associations. Many are active members as demonstrated by their service on committees. Eleven out of thirty-three library directors (37 percent) indicated that at least one member of their staff is currently on an ALA committee and thirteen of twenty-eight (46 percent) have librarians serving on Ohio Library Association committees.

Scholarly research, as demonstrated through publication, is becoming an accepted requirement for many academic librarians. Almost half of the library directors reported that at least one member of their staff had published either a book review, article, monograph, or chapter in a book in the last two years. This is especially

true for librarians in large graduate institutions. Librarians at 72 percent of the colleges and universities in Ohio offering graduate degrees have published within the past two years. Only 26 percent of the libraries at undergraduate institutions have librarians who have published in the same time period. However, graduate institutions typically have larger library staffs, and this may account for the higher rate of publication. The lowest publication record is at independent/religious (27 percent) and independent (40 percent) institutions.

Most library directors (87 percent) thought that the librarians on their staffs were encouraged but not pressured (94 percent) to pursue an additional degree. Nevertheless, in 58 percent of the libraries surveyed, at least one librarian is currently taking courses toward a degree. It is probable that these librarians work at large, public graduate institutions with sizable library staffs. Ironically, the institutions that are most likely to have librarians taking courses are also the most likely to require that the class time be made up. More than half of the public colleges and universities ask that this time be made up, but less than 25 percent of either religious or independent institutions demand this of librarians pursuing an additional degree.

Increasingly, academic libraries in Ohio are staffed by librarians with graduate degrees beyond the MLS. Fifteen libraries (35 percent) indicated that at least one of their professional staff had an MLS plus a doctorate, and an additional 31 percent have staff members with an MLS and a second master's degree. Clearly, although only two library directors (6 percent) believed librarians are "pressured" to pursue an additional degree, many librarians see advantages in securing such degrees.

Whether pursuing advanced degrees, attempting to conduct research and publish, or serving in professional organizations, academic librarians are typically hampered by their work schedules. Most academic librarians in Ohio are required to work either forty hours or thirty-seven and one-half hours per week (librarians at smaller, private institutions are more often allowed to work the slightly shorter week). Forty library directors (93 percent) indicated that

at least some members of their professional staffs were regularly required to work nights and weekends. At thirteen of these libraries (33 percent) all librarians on the staff normally work such hours.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the responses of forty-five Ohio academic library directors to a survey concerning faculty status for librarians revealed: (1) very few academic librarians in the state have full faculty status as defined in the ACRL *Standards*; (2) of the nine standards stipulated by ACRL only four are met by more than half of the institutions in Ohio (see table 2); (3) librarians at large, public, graduate institutions will probably have more of the benefits associated with faculty status and are more often judged to be satisfied with their current status; (4)

TABLE 2
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN OHIO
THAT COMPLY WITH THE ACRL STANDARDS

	Number	Percentage (100)
<i>Professional responsibilities and self-determination</i>		
Peer review	10	23
<i>Library governance</i>		
Academic form of governance	14	36
Election of department heads	2	5
<i>College and university governance</i>		
Membership in faculty senate	30	73
Membership on faculty committees	40	91
<i>Compensation</i>		
Equal salaries with faculty	19	46
Academic-year appointments	1	2
<i>Tenure</i>		
Eligible for tenure	20	48
<i>Promotion</i>		
Academic rank and title	21	50
Same promotion standards	16	42
<i>Leaves</i>		
Eligible for sabbaticals	22	56
<i>Research funds</i>		
Eligible for research funds	26	84
Eligible for travel funds	42	100
<i>Academic freedom</i>		
Same academic freedom as faculty	39	91

librarians at small, private institutions, whether religious or independent, are less likely to receive the benefits of faculty status; and (5) many academic librarians are working diligently to be considered members of the faculty, whether by serving on university committees, publishing research, or pursuing additional degrees.

Libraries at large, public institutions offering graduate degrees, especially those with doctoral programs, typically meet more of the ACRL *Standards*. Librarians in such libraries are more likely to: (1) have academic rank and titles; (2) be eligible for membership on faculty senates; (3) have salaries equal to those of the faculty; and (4) be eligible for tenure. However, they also must meet faculty requirements for both promotion and tenure, and they feel the need to take courses toward additional graduate degrees, despite the fact that they typically must work a forty-hour week. Perhaps, for these reasons, many academic librarians in these types of libraries do not favor full faculty status, "which includes all of the benefits and responsibilities normally given to the teaching faculty."¹² They are, however, judged to be satisfied with their current status in approximately 90 percent of the cases.

Librarians in small, private institutions: (1) are more likely to have descriptive job titles instead of academic rank and titles; (2) are less likely to be eligible for membership in faculty organizations and similarly less likely to participate actively, even if eligible; (3) have salaries lower than those of the teaching faculty; and (4) are ineligible for tenure. On the other hand, these librarians: (1) are somewhat less likely to work on administrative holidays and typically are required to work slightly less than a forty-hour week; (2) are evaluated for promotion by standards and processes different from those of the teaching faculty; and (3) are less likely to publish or take courses toward an additional degree.

In cases where librarians have an opportunity to participate in collegial activities with members of the teaching faculty they appear quite eager to do so. Increasingly, academic librarians have published and have received additional degrees beyond the MLS. Significantly, while few library

directors believed librarians were "pressured," librarians at twenty-five libraries (58 percent) are currently taking courses. Such activity occurs even when librarians are not given release time to take these courses.

In summary, while more than half of the library directors declared professional librarians on their staffs had faculty status, table 2 indicates that this is definitely not the case when the criteria of the ACRL *Standards* are applied. Significant areas, such as equal salaries and academic governance, are provided by a minority of institutions. This survey of Ohio academic librarians in 1979 reaffirms the opinion expressed in 1970 by Smith in discussing the problems and prospects of faculty status: "With only few exceptions, the benefits of academic status have been superficial; substantive areas—salaries, research support, self-direction on the job, voice in academic policy and practice, peer evaluation—have not really been touched."¹³

Significantly, academic year appointments, mandated in the ACRL *Standards*, are granted to librarians at only one institution in Ohio. Therefore, librarians at none of the other colleges and universities can claim full faculty status. Parker concluded in 1972 that: "The critical factor in faculty status for academic librarians appears to be whether or not they work the academic year or the twelve-month year. If they have the academic year all of the other academic perquisites usually follow."¹⁴ This theory is borne out in the case of the one academic library in Ohio that has nine-month contracts. Ironically, the library director at this institution is opposed to such full faculty status.

Although the survey was limited to academic library directors in one state, Ohio was selected because of the diversity and large number of institutions within the state's system of higher education, making it in a sense a microcosm of the nation's academic libraries. I believe the results are indicative of the extent to which all academic librarians have achieved faculty status as defined by the ACRL *Standards*. Clearly, academic librarians in Ohio, and probably those in all other states, have a long way to go before they can claim to have full faculty status.

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