

Research Notes

The Tenure Rate of University Library Directors: A 1983 Survey

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The purpose of this study was to determine the current length of service among library directors at ARL and non-ARL libraries as well as to compare the findings with similar investigations completed in the early 1970s. In addition to tenure data, the survey sought responses on gender, ethnic background, position titles, internal promotion, professional experience, degrees, and retirement and resignation information. The results indicate that the average tenure period for university library directors has been slowly rising since the mid-1970s. This contrasts with earlier predictions that library directors would serve for shorter terms in the future because of continued difficult internal and external problems.

When tenure (length of service) and turnover rate studies of university library directors were first conducted in the early 1970s, higher education was undergoing comprehensive and fundamental governance and political changes. Campus unrest among students and faculty caused many institutions of higher education to become politicized. The stress that these changes created seemed to cause an inordinate number of effective and qualified

college and university administrators, including directors of libraries, to leave their posts prematurely. A number of well-known library directors accepted full-time positions in schools of library and information science. Others placed themselves in the business and consulting field or chose to retire early.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Edward Holley suggested that a major cause of these early directorship resignations was the changing attitude of library personnel, many of whom demanded a larger role in administration and management.¹ Arthur McAnally and Robert Downs, in their influential 1973 article, "The Changing Role of Directors of University Libraries," discussed the resignation and early retirement phenomenon along with other problems. They discovered that out of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) membership of seventy-eight academic libraries in 1972, half of the directorships had changed within the past three years and four of them had changed twice, with size of col-

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The authors would like to express their sincere thanks to Michael Gorman of the University of Illinois Library for his valuable advice and comments on an earlier version of this paper.

lection having little effect on the turnover rate. Therefore, they predicted that if this trend continued, the future tenure for ARL directors would average only five to six years.²

Three historical and comparative studies on ARL directors were completed after the McAnally and Downs article. Some of these authors interpreted their resignation and early retirement data somewhat differently than McAnally and Downs. For example, Louis Kaplan provided historical data on the frequency of early retirement among ARL directors between 1926 and 1975, and concluded that individual factors may play more important roles in the retirement decision than previously thought.³ Jerry Parsons, in a 1976 study, compared the sociodemographic characteristics of forty-two ARL directors in 1958 with seventy-eight ARL directors in 1973. He noted that the 1958 group had an average tenure of more than eight years, a median tenure of nine, and a range of from less than one year (two) to twenty-six years (two), while the 1973 group of directors had an average tenure of less than eight years, a median of five, and a range of from less than one year (eighteen) to twenty-seven years (one). Only nine directors appeared in both groups. All directors in 1958 were men and the number of women directors had climbed to only four by 1973.⁴

In a sociodemographic study of ARL directors between 1933 and 1973, William Cohn found that of the seventy-four United States academic libraries that were ARL members in 1973, thirty-four named new directors during the period January 1970 to December 1973. His investigation revealed that 12.65 years was the average tenure of all directors for the 1934-69 period. The average tenure for 1970-73, however, was only two years. Another interesting compilation was the data for the 1973 incumbents' immediate predecessors. Between 1934 and 1969, the average tenure for the preceding director was 14.1 years, and in the 1970-73 period it was fifteen. From 1934 to 1969, more of the incumbents' predecessors left because of death or retirement than for teaching or to direct a different ARL or a non-ARL library.⁵

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine the current (spring of 1983) tenure situation among the chief administrators of libraries in doctorate-granting colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. In addition, the investigators hoped that the study would answer these questions: Did the "steady-state" financial and political environment of higher education that began in the mid-1970s lead to increased turnover rates among university library directors, or did the new situation affect the prediction that short-term tenure for these administrators would be the future norm? Would the data support the McAnally and Downs prediction that the tenure for ARL directors would average only five to six years, a conclusion that was also supported by the Parsons study? The authors also wanted to compare for the first time their ARL findings with those of a grouping of major non-ARL university libraries.

The research instrument chosen for this study was a two-page questionnaire mailed in April 1983 to a total of 189 academic library members of the Association of Research Libraries (ninety-seven) as well as those libraries included in the Association of College and Research Libraries' *ACRL University Library Statistics, 1978-1979* (ninety-two).⁶ Vacancies and acting directorships were excluded from the selection of this group of participants. From the 189 questionnaires sent out, 171 were returned (90.5 percent), 91 from ARL librarians and 80 from non-ARL librarians. Most major state and private universities were represented in this survey.

The survey sought responses to questions in the following areas of interest: gender, ethnic background, position titles, internal promotion, professional experience, degrees, and tenure, retirement, and resignation information.

RESULTS

Gender

Of the 171 questionnaires returned, there were 141 male (75 ARL and 66 non-ARL) and 30 female (16 ARL and 14 non-

ARL) respondents. The males represented 44 private (21 ARL, 23 non-ARL) and 97 public (54 ARL, 43 non-ARL) institutions. Females represented 9 private (6 ARL, 3 non-ARL) and 21 public (10 ARL, 11 non-ARL) institutions. In 1973, only four ARL directors and one acting director were women.⁷

Ethnic Background

Of the respondents who replied to this questionnaire, almost 95 percent were white (133 men, 29 women); 4 were Asian-Americans (3 men, 1 woman) and 2 were blacks (both men). Three persons did not answer the ethnic background question.

Position Titles

Table 1 shows a greater variety of position titles held by current chief administrators than was found by the Parsons study, which noted that the 1958 group of ARL chief library administrators was composed of twenty-nine directors (69 percent), sixteen librarians (38 percent), three directors and librarians, and one dean. The 1973 group consisted of fifty-two directors (67 percent), twenty-eight librarians (thirty-six percent), four deans (5 percent), three directors and librarians, one dean and director, and one vice president and librarian.⁸

Why are the titles "university librarian" and "dean" used more in 1983? It has been argued that the responsibilities that are assumed by a chief library administrator are comparable to a major academic officer in the administrative structure of a university. Therefore, the status of a library director should be parallel to a college dean. This could be the major reason why there was an increase in the use of the title of "dean" for chief library administrators. The title of "university librarian" seems to satisfy the description of a dual role: a university-wide administrator as well as a specialist/scholar in the field of library and information science. The more purely administrative titles, such as "vice president," "vice chancellor," and "associate provost" for chief library administrators, which were first proposed in the

TABLE 1
CURRENT POSITION TITLE

	ARL Men		ARL Women		Total ARL		Non-ARL Men		Non-ARL Women		Total Non-ARL		Grand Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Director	38	50.7	5	31.3	43	47.3	31	47.0	9	64.3	40	50.0	83	48.5
University Librarian	22	29.3	3	18.8	25	27.5	16	24.2	3	21.4	19	23.8	44	25.7
Dean	10	13.3	2	12.5	12	13.2	12	18.2	1	7.1	13	16.3	25	14.6
Chief Librarian	0	0	3	18.8	3	3.3	0	0	1	7.1	1	1.3	4	2.3
Dean and Director	1	1.3	0	0	1	1.1	2	3.0	0	0	2	2.5	3	1.8
Director of Library/University Library Services Librarian	1	1.3	1	6.3	2	2.2	2	3.0	0	0	2	2.5	2	1.2
Associate Provost and Director of Libraries	1	1.3	1	6.3	1	1.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.6
Chief Librarian and Director of Libraries	1	1.3	0	0	1	1.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.6
Co-Director	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.5	0	0	1	1.3	1	0.6
Dean and University Librarian	1	1.3	0	0	1	1.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.6
Director and V.P. for University Libraries	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.5	0	0	1	1.3	1	0.6
Director of Library and Learning Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.5	0	0	1	1.3	1	0.6
University Librarian and Director	1	1.3	0	0	1	1.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.6
V.P. and University Librarian	0	0	1	6.3	1	1.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.6
Grand Totals	75	100	16	100	91	100	66	100	14	100	80	100	171	100
Percent		43.9		9.4		53.2		38.6		8.2		46.8		

early 1970s, have not been widely accepted within the university community.⁹

Promotion

A little over 23 percent of the respondents surveyed were promoted from within their institutions. This figure included twenty-two directors of ARL libraries (nineteen men, three women) and eighteen directors of non-ARL libraries (thirteen men, five women). The former group represented 24.2 percent of the ninety-one ARL respondents while the latter group represented 22.5 percent of the eighty non-ARL respondents. As seen in table 2, the largest number of promotions were from the general assistant/associate director category, followed by heads of technical services and public services.

The questionnaire also asked how long the persons promoted from within had been employed by their institutions before assuming the directorship. The figures in table 3 suggest that there is a bias in favor of outside candidates and that there would be, statistically, an advantage in moving to another library to gain advancement.

Professional Experience

As summarized from table 4, the greatest concentration of professional experience for current academic library (ARL and non-ARL) directors was in the fifteen-to-twenty years range, (42 out of a total of 171,) although 38 directors fell into the thirty-one-or-more-years range. Among the ARL directors, 34 percent had been part of the profession for twenty or fewer years, 46 percent for from twenty-one to thirty years, and 19 percent for more than thirty years. Ten women directors were part of the twenty-or-fewer-years category, three fell into the twenty-one-to-thirty-years bracket, and three had served for more than thirty years.

Parsons found that those with fewer than twenty years of library experience accounted for 39 percent of his 1958 sample, but for only 32 percent of the 1973 sample. The number of persons, however, serving more than thirty-five years had increased

from 6 percent in 1958 to 13 percent in 1973. He surmised that World War II may have shortened the time for professional service for male directors. In addition, more individuals in the 1958 group may have come to university librarianship from the teaching faculty or from another profession.¹⁰ In contrast, the present survey showed that 46 percent of the non-ARL library directors had been in the profession for twenty years or less, 26 percent for twenty-one to thirty years, and 26 percent for thirty-one or more years.

Degrees

Because of a slight ambiguity in the phrasing of the survey's degree question, some respondents merely indicated the highest degree (doctorate) they had earned. This may explain the low percentage of respondents who reported they had earned the M.L.S./M.L.I.S. degree.

In early 1983, the number of subject masters held by ARL directors amounted to thirty-five, and the number of Ph.D.'s totaled eighteen in library and information science and twelve in various other disciplines. The greatest increase since the Parsons study came in the number of subject master's degrees, which rose from fourteen in 1973, to thirty-five in 1983. Comparable figures for non-ARL library directors show twenty-nine subject masters, eighteen Ph.D.'s in library and information science, and twelve Ph.D.'s in other disciplines. (See table 5.)

Cohn, as well as Parsons, found that the number of doctorates held by 1973 ARL incumbents had not dramatically increased over previous totals of ARL directors, despite the great increase in the number of individuals holding the doctorate in library and information science.¹² Results of this survey support their findings.

TENURE, RETIREMENTS, AND RESIGNATIONS

The tenure data drawn from the present survey indicated that nearly 75 percent of the responding ARL directors had held their positions for ten or fewer years. Fifteen of the sixteen women directors fell into the ten-years-or-under group. In

TABLE 2
LAST POSITION TITLE BEFORE BEING PROMOTED
TO DIRECTOR OF CURRENT INSTITUTION'S LIBRARY

	ARL Men		ARL Women		ARL Total		Non-ARL Men		Non-ARL Women		Non-ARL Total		Grand Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Assistant/Associate Director/Univ. Librarian	7	36.8	0		7	31.8	7	53.8	3	60.0	10	55.6	17	42.5
Asst./Assoc. Director/Univ. Librarian for Technical Services	4	21.1	0		4	18.2	0		0		0		4	10.0
Asst./Assoc. Director/Univ. Librarian for Public Services	2	10.5	0		2	9.1	1	7.7	0		1	5.6	3	7.5
Law Librarian	1	5.3	1	33.3	2	9.1	0		0		0		2	5.0
Assoc. Librarian for Collection Development	1	5.3	0		1	4.5	0		0		0		1	2.5
Asst. Director for Budget and Administrative Services	1	5.3	0		1	4.5	0		0		0		1	2.5
Deputy Librarian	0		1	33.3	1	4.5	1	7.7	0		1	5.6	2	5.0
Director of Library Services Group	0		1	33.3	1	4.5	0		0		0		1	2.5
Medical Librarian	1	5.3	0		1	4.5	0		0		0		1	2.5
Professor	0		0		0		1	7.7	0		1	5.6	1	2.5
Head Catalog Librarian	0		0		0		0		1	20.0	1	5.6	1	2.5
Asst. to the Dean of the Graduate School	0		0		0		0		1	20.0	1	5.6	1	2.5
Head, Order Dept.	0		0		0		1	7.7	0		1	5.6	1	2.5
Asst. Dean of Education	0		0		0		1	7.7	0		1	5.6	1	2.5
Assoc. Librarian for Information Services	0		0		0		1	7.7	0		1	5.6	1	2.5
No Answer	2	10.5	0		2	9.1	0		0		0		2	5.0
Grand Totals	19	100	3	100	22	100	13	100	5	100	18	100	40	100
Percent		47.5		7.5		55.0		32.5		12.5		45.0		100

TABLE 3
NUMBER OF YEARS WORKED AT
CURRENT INSTITUTION BEFORE BEING NAMED DIRECTOR

	ARL Men		ARL Women		ARL Total		Non-ARL Men		Non-ARL Women		Non-ARL Total		Grand Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less Than 1 Year	1	5.3	0		1	4.5	1	7.7	0		1	5.6	2	5.0
1-2 Yrs	2	10.5	0		2	9.1	1	7.7	0		1	5.6	3	7.5
3-4 Yrs	3	15.8	1	33.3	4	18.2	3	23.1	0		3	16.7	7	17.5
5-6 Yrs	1	5.3	1	33.3	2	9.1	2	15.4	1	20.0	3	16.7	5	12.5
7-8 Yrs	3	15.8	0		3	13.6	1	7.7	0		1	5.6	4	10.0
9-10 Yrs	2	10.5	0		2	9.1	0		2	40.0	2	11.1	4	10.0
11-12 Yrs	2	10.5	0		2	9.1	1	7.7	0		1	5.6	3	7.5
13-14 Yrs	0		0		0		2	15.4	0		2	11.1	2	5.0
15-16 Yrs	0		0		0		0		1	20.0	1	5.6	1	2.5
17-18 Yrs	1	5.3	0		1	4.5	0		0		0		1	2.5
19-20 Yrs	1	5.3	1	33.3	2	9.1	0		0		0		2	5.0
21 or More Yrs	3	15.8	0		3	13.6	2	15.4	1	20.0	3	16.7	6	15.0
Totals	19	100	3	100	22	100	13	100	5	100	18	100	40	100
Percent		47.5		7.5		55.0		32.5		12.5		45		100

TABLE 4
NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE LIBRARY PROFESSION

	ARL Men		ARL Women		ARL Total		Non-ARL Men		Non-ARL Women		Non-ARL Total		Grand Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1-5 Yrs	2	2.7	0		2	2.2	1	1.5	0		1	1.3	3	1.8
6-10 Yrs	0		0		0		1	1.5	0		1	1.3	1	0.6
11-14 Yrs	5	6.7	4	25.0	9	9.9	9	13.6	4	28.6	13	16.3	22	12.9
15-20 Yrs	14	18.7	6	37.6	20	22.0	22	33.3	0		22	27.5	42	24.6
21-25 Yrs	18	24.0	3	18.8	21	23.1	9	13.6	5	35.7	14	17.5	35	20.5
26-30 Yrs	21	28.0	0		21	23.1	6	9.1	1	7.1	7	8.8	28	16.4
31 or More Yrs	14	18.7	3	18.8	17	18.7	18	27.3	3	21.4	21	26.3	38	22.2
No Answer	1	1.3	0		1	1.1	0		1	7.1	1	1.3	2	1.2
Grand Totals	75	100	16	100	91	100	66	100	14	100	80	100	171	100
Percent		43.9		9.4		53.2		38.6		8.2		46.8		100

TABLE 5
DEGREES EARNED

	ARL Men		ARL Women		ARL Total		Non-ARL Men		Non-ARL Women		Total Non-ARL		Grand Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
M.L.S./M.L.I.S.	65	52.0	12	52.2	77	52.0	50	46.3	11	64.7	61	48.8	138	50.5
Subject Masters	31	24.8	4	17.4	35	23.6	26	24.0	3	17.6	29	23.2	64	23.4
Advanced Certificate	2	1.6	1	4.3	3	2.0	2	1.9	0	0	2	1.6	6	1.8
PhD. in Library/Information Science	13	10.4	5	21.8	18	12.2	17	15.7	1	5.9	18	14.4	36	13.2
Subject Ph.D.	12	9.6	0	0	12	8.1	10	9.3	2	11.8	12	9.6	24	8.8
LL.B.	1	0.8	0	0	1	0.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.4
J.D.	1	0.8	0	0	1	0.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.4
B.L.S.	0	0	1	4.3	1	0.7	2	1.9	0	0	2	1.6	3	1.1
No Answer	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.9	0	0	1	0.8	1	0.4
Grand Totals	125	100	23	100	148	100	108	100	17	100	125	100	273	100

TABLE 6
NUMBER OF YEARS AS DIRECTOR OF CURRENT INSTITUTION

	ARL Men		ARL Women		Total ARL		Non-ARL Men		Non-ARL Women		Total Non-ARL		Grand Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less Than a Year	4	5.3	3	18.8	7	7.7	5	7.6	3	21.4	8	10.0	15	8.8
1-2 Yrs	2	2.7	2	12.5	4	4.4	12	18.2	2	14.3	14	17.5	18	10.5
3-4 Yrs	16	21.3	3	18.8	19	20.9	10	15.2	5	35.7	15	18.8	34	19.9
5-6 Yrs	13	17.3	2	12.5	15	16.5	5	7.6	0	0	5	6.3	20	11.7
7-8 Yrs	8	10.7	5	31.3	13	14.3	7	10.6	2	14.3	9	11.3	22	12.9
9-10 Yrs	10	13.3	0	0	10	11.0	4	6.1	0	0	4	5.0	14	8.2
11-12 Yrs	7	9.3	0	0	7	7.7	6	9.1	0	0	6	7.5	13	7.6
13-14 Yrs	6	8.0	0	0	6	6.6	6	9.1	1	7.1	7	8.8	13	7.6
15-16 Yrs	5	6.7	1	6.3	6	6.6	3	4.5	1	7.1	4	5.0	10	5.8
17-18 Yrs	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.5	0	0	1	1.3	1	0.6
19-20 Yrs	1	1.3	0	0	1	1.1	1	1.5	0	0	1	1.3	2	1.2
21 or More Yrs	3	4.0	0	0	3	3.3	6	9.1	0	0	6	7.5	9	5.3
Grand Totals	75	100	16	100	91	100	66	100	14	100	80	100	171	100
Percent		43.9		9.4		53.2		38.6		8.2		46.8		100

comparison with the ARL directors, a larger percentage of non-ARL librarians have held their positions for fewer than five years. A little over 46 percent of the non-ARL directors fell into this category, while only one-third of the ARL directors did.

The combined tenure data in table 6 reveal that about 72 percent of both ARL and non-ARL respondents (ninety-six men, twenty-seven women) have held their present positions for ten or fewer years, 40 percent for under five years (forty-nine men, eighteen women), 15 percent for eleven to fourteen years (twenty-five men, one woman), 8 percent (eleven men, two women) for fifteen to twenty years, and 5 percent (nine men) for more than twenty years. Twenty-seven women out of thirty respondents fell into the ten-or-fewer-years category.

Four persons indicated that they were going to retire by the end of 1983 (two ARL and two non-ARL). One director replied that he was resigning and, after a year's sabbatical leave of absence, returning to a technical services position.

Parsons found that in 1973, 57 percent of the ARL directors had held their positions for five or fewer years, compared to only 37 percent in 1958.¹³ His study also confirmed McAnally and Downs' prediction that university library directorships were developing into short-term (five to six years) positions. The present survey, however, does not support these short-term predictions. The 1983 data suggest that the average tenure period has been increasing slowly over the last decade. This phenomenon might be explained by a cycle of fewer opportunities created by retirements or resignations, which would coincide with the national trend among university faculty, noted in various studies in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*; difficult economic conditions throughout the United States and Canada; and/or by the increasing number of two-professional

households, which might cause one of the spouses to delay or to decide not to change positions.

More importantly, however, may have been the nation-wide retrenchment or "steady-state" atmosphere within higher education that so far has spared few university libraries. There have been, therefore, fewer "greener pastures" for individuals to move to. Nevertheless, an increase in the mobility of women may cause the average tenure period to decline once again in the near future.¹⁴ The ever-increasing number of women directors and its consequences may not have been trends that could have been predicted by McAnally and Downs, Parsons, and Cohn.

Also, in recent years, as a senior academic officer within a university, the library director has become more frequently appointed to a fixed term of office. An evaluation process usually takes place just before the end of such a term. The central question of how this evaluation process affects the tenure period for chief library administrators may constitute an important topic for further research.

CONCLUSION

The results of the present study indicate that the average tenure period for chief administrators of both ARL and non-ARL libraries has been slowly rising since the mid-1970s. These findings challenge the predictions of previous studies, which forecast shorter terms of tenure. The relatively "steady-state" financial and political environment of higher education in North America might be a major contributing factor to this trend. Among the other significant findings of this 1983 survey were an increase in the number of women directors and an increase in the use of a variety of position titles which, no doubt, reflects the changing status and role a chief library administrator plays on the university campus.

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Changes in Rank Lists of Serials Over Time: Interlending versus Citation Data

Maurice B. Line

The British Library Lending Division carried out three major surveys of its lending patterns in 1975, 1980, and 1983. The rank list of serials requested for loan showed considerable variation over time. There was also low overlap in the top titles requested. A comparison was made of these rankings with the rankings from Journal Citation Reports (JCR) produced by the Institute for Scientific Information. The JCR rankings had a high degree of overlap, 95 percent for the top 100 in Science Citation Index, while the Lending Division had only a 57 percent overlap. The reasons for this variation are discussed.

Three major surveys carried out by the British Library Lending Division in 1975, 1980, and 1983^{1,2,3} produced rank lists of serials in order of demand. Comparisons of these rank lists showed very considerable changes over time, suggesting that it might be dangerous to rely unduly on a rank list relating to one year. Changes in the precise rank order would be expected; what was unexpected was the low overlap in the top titles requested.

For interest, a similar comparison was made between the rank lists produced by the Institute for Scientific Information and

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I am grateful to Betty Smith, bibliographic research officer at the British Library Lending Division, for doing the comparisons between the ISI rank lists; and to Trevor Palmer, of the Lending Division's Research Section, for making comments and suggestions on a draft of this note.