

# Letters

To the Editor:

I could not agree more with the perceptive observations of Ellsworth Mason on the disadvantages of faculty rank for librarians in his editorial of the November 1972, issue. In my experience, most librarians who are recommended for high faculty rank in their institutions use the "or the equivalent" escape clause, where the university statutes state "Ph.D. degree or the equivalent." Grateful, patient administrators seldom raise fuss at the application of this phrase to librarians; they accept fifteen years' loyal service in the institution and a record of not causing any trouble that would embarrass the institution in the state legislature as "the equivalent" of the Ph.D. degree. Similarly, the same years of service and keeping out of mischief can be applied to the "equivalent" of research and publication.

But achieving what benefits can be obtained by riding on the coattails of faculty ranks always reminds me of the rules that no member of the faculty or staff may earn more than x dollars or spend more than x hours on extra-institutional work or the rule that a pregnant member of the staff must resign her position within x months of becoming pregnant. Such rules, however unjust, are easier to apply than judging the performance of the individual and dismissing the staff member who is no longer performing at a minimum level, regardless of the cause. If the library is under "adequate leadership" (Mason's phrase), full benefits, better adapted to the librarian's situation and needs can be ob-

tained, based on an accurate description of the librarian's qualifications, responsibilities, and needs.

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To the Editor:

Mr. Ellsworth Mason proclaims in his editorial (November 1972) that "in any healthy academic library under adequate leadership, the only faculty benefit denied librarians is the longer vacation period." Either we have a lot of very sick academic libraries under inadequate leadership or Mr. Mason needs new glasses. Take a good look around, Mr. Mason. Academic librarians without faculty status are the lowest paid academic personnel on many campuses. Academic librarians are ineligible for membership in academic senates. Academic librarians are ineligible for sabbatical leaves. Academic librarians are ineligible to become principal investigators or to apply directly for research grants.

Now maybe to Mr. Mason in his exalted library director's office it is unimportant that academic librarians without faculty status are underpaid, that they're disenfranchised, that they're expected to update their professional education on their own time and out of their own pockets. He must consider these inabilities as unimportant since he doesn't even deign to mention them in his editorial. Maybe he's so busy chasing the "exciting dynamics" of academic librarianship

that he hasn't had time to look back and notice that a lot of his professional colleagues are suffocating under library policies they've had no voice in developing, or moonlighting because academic librarians' salaries aren't good enough to support a family, or wistfully read-

ing about conferences or workshops or courses they can't attend.

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