

Library Services to the Graduate Community: The University of California, Berkeley

Services currently offered at the University of California, Berkeley, Library are evaluated in terms of their special or potential relevance to graduate students, especially as they meet students' needs in the various stages of their graduate careers—course work, dissertation proposal, dissertation research, and dissertation writing. Not only are special services necessary for the sake of the graduate student but are at the same time the means for increasing the scope and meaning of the professional librarian's role.

AT FIRST GLANCE, it would seem the topic, "Library Services to the Graduate Community," represents an incorrect approach to a program of library service. Shouldn't we be asking ourselves not *who* wants to know, but rather what needs are and if we are prepared to meet them no matter who expresses them in the university community?

Another look at the problem, however, reveals a surprising reality: Our major university libraries are, in fact, geared toward the faculty and the undergraduate. The graduate community is by and large left out. This is so de-

spite the fact that at most universities, including the University of California, Berkeley, graduate students represent 50 percent of the student body. For undergraduates we build elaborate undergraduate libraries, whose architecture, furniture, and general atmosphere transmit the message, "Let us help you." We should not overdo this point as all too often the undergraduate gets the short end of the deal. But in general it is true the university library does what it can to make class reserve collections efficient and fair, to provide a staff ready to teach undergraduates how to get the most from the library, and to develop special undergraduate-oriented browsing collections.

As for the faculty, we are especially helpful when we are aware it is a faculty member who makes the request. For example, when a professor suggests that a book be ordered, we have a mechanism to set in motion, and we do it relatively quickly. When a graduate student suggests a book to be ordered, how many times have we heard that student asked, "Do you know a faculty member who could sponsor or sign this request?"

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In short, when we think of the university, we think of "instruction" and "research." When we think of instruction, we think of the undergraduates. When we think of research, we think of the faculty. The graduate students have no prestige, no presence. But they do have very definite needs which are not met by their graduate research methods courses. Seldom do these courses deal with the basic question of how to use the library—largely because the faculty itself has not had the training or experience to do so. Graduate students need to know the literature in their field and its bibliographic structure. They need to know about some of the inadequacies and shortcomings either caused by or not well-solved by the libraries themselves. (Perhaps a good deal of faculty apathy toward the library stems from their experiences when they were graduate students.)

To correct this neglect, librarians must first ask themselves: What is special about the graduate student? Although there may be several answers to this question, one useful approach is to divide the graduate students into two groups: (1) those pursuing the professional degree and (2) those pursuing an academic degree.

PROFESSIONAL DEGREE STUDENTS

Professional degree students are most akin to undergraduates in the way they use the library. Though there is variation among professional schools, as a rule these students need material required in or supplementary to their course work; their information needs are rather clear-cut; the professional schools themselves often provide a good deal of the information and support in the form of syllabi designed for particular subjects. Whatever research projects the students engage in are usually short-term, and in such cases they may need bibliographic assistance at a somewhat more specialized level than the

undergraduate. Yet, on the whole the professional degree students in disciplines such as law, medicine, business administration, pharmacy, and even librarianship, are well assisted by the services presently provided. Thus when we talk of the forgotten graduate student, we are not primarily dealing with this group.

ACADEMIC DEGREE STUDENTS

The second group, those students pursuing academic degrees, constitute that statusless group on which we need to concentrate. For the sake of analysis, the life cycle of this group may be divided into four stages: (1) course work; (2) dissertation proposal; (3) dissertation research; and (4) dissertation writing. In the discussion below, several services that are offered in limited ways at the University of California, Berkeley (UCB), are highlighted, services which are not necessarily all currently available to or focused primarily upon graduate students but which would give a glimpse of what is possible in the way of meeting needs that arise.

• *Course Work*

University libraries are generally well equipped to satisfy the first stage, course-work needs. Here the graduate student who is pursuing the academic degree is basically in the same situation as the one pursuing the professional degree and as the undergraduate. Admittedly, this is an oversimplified description, as we know that graduate students take courses requiring short-term research leading to "mini-dissertations" which would, therefore, fit into the third stage, the research period.

Proposal Writing

During the second stage, the period of proposal writing, the graduate student's dependence on the library intensifies. At this time, most graduate students

need to be able to consult a librarian; some students should not proceed without that consultation.

At UCB such a service for graduate students has recently been formalized in the social sciences and humanities. This subject limitation is arbitrary and reflects the specialization and physical separation of subject collections within this large library system. In time, hopefully, this service will be extended to other fields. It is called the "Library Graduate Bibliographic Service." On an appointment basis a reference librarian meets with the graduate student, discusses library resources and guides to the literature and information in the student's subject, and opens the door to other collections or services such as computerized literature and information sources. The librarian at this point is an initial contact person whom the student can consult for on-going advice concerning the writing of the proposal and later problems as they arise. Conceptually, this service goes a step beyond the standard notion that librarians give service on a short-term, one-shot basis. Although the use of the service has been small (it is new and advertising has been kept to a minimum in order to be sure the undertaking is manageable), the librarians who provide the service and the students who have received it regard it as an excellent addition to existing programs.

Dissertation Research

After the dissertation proposal has been accepted, the student begins a third stage of graduate life when not only is it important to be able to consult the librarian again but also when two other needs come to the fore: (1) the need to retrieve large amounts of material from the library in the effort to read all the relevant literature and gather all the relevant data; and (2) the necessity of "keeping up" with what others are doing in the field—in other

words, a current awareness service.

Retrieving Materials

The ease or difficulty of retrieving material from the library is directly related to the collection policies, cataloging practices, loan procedures, amount of paging and shelving assistance, as well as the spatial layout of the library. The complex library system at UCB, as well as severe budgetary and space problems over the last several years, has made the route one must go to retrieve material comparable to an obstacle course. No average library user can be expected to travel such a course with competence. In recognition of this state of affairs, UCB launched, in November 1973, under the umbrella of the Cooperative Services Department, a delivery service for the faculty. By dialing an easy-to-remember campus number whose digits translate to letters spelling BAKER (the name the service has come to be called) a faculty member can request up to four items per day, with as much or as little information he or she has at hand. A corps of student employees, especially trained in the art of retrieval, finds the material, charges it out to the requestor, has it photocopied if so desired, and then delivers it to the faculty member's departmental office. Within twenty-four to forty-eight hours the requestor has either the material itself or a report detailing why not. The service includes placing holds when material is out to another borrower, placing searches when there is no ready reason why it is not on the shelf, or retrieving from an off-campus storage facility or from an in-process location such as the bindery or the catalog department. If the material has been formally declared missing, the library tries to hasten the purchase of a replacement copy for the requestor. If the material is not owned by the library, a copy of the request is sent to the Collection Development Office as a candidate for ordering. If the

requestor so desires, the request will be transmitted to the Interlibrary Borrowing Service.

The delivery service has been an instant and continuing success. Unsolicited comments pour in from faculty in all disciplines expressing the value of the service to them as instructors and research personnel: the service saved them time; the library facilitated their research and freed them for more contact with students; frustrations had been reduced—guesswork, legwork, and all kinds of routine work had been eliminated. Most of all, many have been amazed at the library's ability to locate materials they themselves had been unable to find after long searches. Aside from the problems caused when the requestor has misspelled an author's name or there is a jumbled title, a significant number occur because the requestor doesn't know that the work is part of a series to which the library has provided access only by a series title. Or, frequently, the requestor knows a personal author when the work has been entered in the catalog under a corporate author or sponsoring governmental agency.

An interesting development is that many graduate students have found a way of using this delivery service for their own research purposes by identifying themselves to us as researchers for faculty. Since there are not yet enough student requests of this type, their requests have been honored; and the only concern is that a campus address for delivery is given. Their use of this service demonstrates that the graduate student's life in this stage of the cycle can be made much easier. It should be possible for a department to vouch for the student's need for this kind of service. In fact, UCB departments already differentiate for the library between graduate students in their course-work period and those in their research period: The latter receive longer borrowing privileges.

Current Awareness

To satisfy the current awareness need in the UCB library, both graduate students and faculty can receive computer-produced bibliographies tailored to an individual's needs in the fields of education, biology, agriculture, chemistry, and the social sciences. For a nominal fee of \$5.00 to \$10.00 per year, the university's Center for Information Services provides printouts weekly, biweekly, or monthly, depending on the data base accessed.

Another service worthy of mention is the New York Times Information Bank, not because graduate students use it in a unique way nor because it has any special application to the graduate community, but because it is a devious way of getting them into the library to introduce them to other resources and services. (This, of course, is true for faculty and undergraduates as well.) Once they have had their question answered by the bank (and it's hard not to be impressed with the results even when they may not be particularly relevant to the question asked), the librarian leads the users to other sources, more traditional in nature, yet still new to them.

Dissertation Writing

In the final stage of this graduate student life cycle, the writing period, a current awareness service is still helpful so that the student can be assured that everything is being covered that should be covered. The student's need for library resources in this phase is probably greatly reduced. Perhaps near the end of this stage, a retrospective computerized search, if an appropriate data base is available, would tie up any loose ends although this should not be necessary if the previous stages had been properly handled.

CONCLUSION

Although this discussion has not con-

sidered the costs to the library of these services, all of them are worthwhile. But if we put them in the context of other needs, such as book acquisition or staff salaries, they might very well rate lower in a hierarchy of priorities. On the other hand, experience at UCB does show that the money for a given service can be made available by its very inauguration if that service is really needed. For example, the delivery service was originally free to the departmental users. Beginning in July 1975, the UCB Library began to recover part of its costs by charging for it. It turns out that departments are quite willing to pay for such a service because they rec-

ognize its unique value. Indeed, from their standpoint they are saving money.

Not only are such services necessary for the sake of the forgotten graduate students, but at the same time they are the means for increasing the scope and meaning of the professional librarian's role. For behind the provision of these services lies an affirmation of the role of the librarian as the expert who can provide the key to the bibliographic organization of the literature of any subject area. Given the virtual explosion of knowledge sources, the librarian's professional role can and must become a central one. These services then are only a first step toward that goal.