

Letter

To the Editor:

I read with interest Bonnie Horenstein's "Job Satisfaction of Academic Librarians: An Examination of the Relationships between Satisfaction, Faculty Status, and Participation" (*College & Research Libraries* 54 [May 1993].)

I have several methodological concerns about her study, however. The terms *faculty status* and *faculty rank* are too imprecise, convey multiple meanings, and reduce the validity of results of the study. For example, the questionnaire asks librarians to respond yes or no about having faculty status. This is a complex question and possibly there are multiple answers. For example, librarians of the University of California are academic appointees and do not have senate faculty status. And UC librarians have academic rank and career status, not faculty rank or tenure. So, if UC librarians had been sampled, they might have given diverse responses according to their interpretation of faculty status. In addition, Horenstein's questionnaire may have unintentionally included a self-fulfilling prophecy: only full-time librarians were sampled.

There is also a potential gender and ethnic bias as some important part-time librarians were excluded who may have been women or men with a family or other valuable duties. Also, several significant, developing areas of academic specialization were not listed in the service area of the questionnaire: bibliographic instruction; computer-assisted research; collection development; and research instruction. In addition, the author's survey seemed to include only currently employed librarians; it did not include librarians unemployed because of layoffs or hiring freezes. Clearly, regional and state economies may impact professional satisfaction.

In addition, the issue of political correctness is important. During academic downsizing and job reductions, some librarians would be politically correct to express high job satisfaction on an anonymous questionnaire because of concern that review initiators may learn of their professional dissatisfaction. Finally, academic librarians may have perceived differences between growing academic goals and current professional opportunities and had difficulty in communicating those concerns in terms of academic status and satisfaction. In essence, these significant issues of academic status and satisfaction require further in-depth study and analysis of the many factors influencing research librarians' attitudes and responses to surveys.

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