

Appendix: A Summary of *College Library: A Plan for Action*

placed on guidance and counseling of students who have not made firm decisions regarding their educational and vocational plans.

5. Students are able to prepare for transfer to the upper-division of senior colleges with equality.

The community college can serve the educational, personal, and economic needs of many Americans today. It follows that the library program of this unique college should be characterized by unique functions, and the community college library program has had its share of problems in identifying these functions and carrying out programs to support them. In 1961, the writer undertook a doctoral project at Columbia University Teachers College in the area of community college library programming, part of which was a comprehensive questionnaire (circa 1963) directed to community college library directors. The work led to the book, *The Community College Library; A Plan for Action*,¹ containing six case studies of representative library programs. Of the 103 responding community colleges, only six had at least 20,000-volume collections, seating for 25 per cent of the full-time-equivalent enrollment, and a staff of at least two professional librarians. Of these six above-average programs, only three had budgets which were at least 5 per cent of the college budget, and they were barely 5 per cent.²

Implications for the truly effective and functioning community college library program lie in the areas of both the library director and the college president, and are also described. Library practice was examined by means of the questionnaire, based in part on the American Library Association standards;³ the practice as determined from responses was judged by means of criteria. Following validation of each of the criteria, illustrative measures of the extent to which it was a part of a library's program are suggested and described. The measures were constructed as objectively as possible; if a substantial number received a positive reply, or comments and descriptive statements indicated confirmation of the measure, there was a likelihood that the criterion was being met. The criteria and measures of the successful community college library program appear in *The Community College Library*.⁴

There are three general conclusions from the comparison of current community college library practice, as revealed in the data coming from the questionnaire, with the criteria established. The community

college library needs an over-all general improvement quantitatively and qualitatively to provide minimal basic library service. When discussing problems and limitations upon effectiveness and success of their programs, community college library directors cite the size of collections, physical facilities (especially seating), and adequate staffing. Of the community college libraries represented, 63 per cent have less than 20,000 volumes; 75 per cent lack seating for at least 25 per cent of their students; and in 31 per cent of them, the respondent comprises the entire library staff! ⁵

Although there are varied general as well as specialized ways in which the library program can best serve the unique needs and functions of the community college program, the library is now most often unable to serve its institution effectively because it lacks financial support. The library directors' statements include reminders that such conditions add up to the problem of budgetary provision. The suggestion that they produce ingenious and unique techniques of library service to the community college is futile, for all of their efforts are spent on maintenance of a day-to-day program with the means currently provided them.

The community college administrator should ascertain whether the best interests of the library program are being served. With the library director, he should study the library's organization, staffing, problems, and goals to determine how well they fulfill instructional and other functions. Community college administrators and planners should make every effort to obtain a capable library director at the earliest possible moment in the development of the college. A minimum of 5 per cent of the institutional budget should be devoted to the library maintenance program, exclusive of audio-visual materials, after the first five years of the college's existence. In new community colleges, basic library collection and equipment should be part of the initial financial outlay, planned and developed before the first classes are held. Where community colleges are going into new buildings, the library director should be able to work with the architect. Many inadequate and unsuccessful community college library programs have been the result of the assumption that basic book stock could be acquired over a period of years, even though the annual budget available for the community college library is often inadequate for even current maintenance.

The need for exceptionally well qualified community college faculty should be recognized as directly related to the success of the library

Appendix: A Summary of *College Library: A Plan for Action*

program. Community college libraries should be entirely independent of the libraries of other institutions. The library director should have faculty status equivalent to that of a departmental chairman. The local organization and ways of working should be such that the library director has communication with the community college president (or chief administrator) and (academic) dean.

The library director should give support for and seek implementation of the ALA standards, especially in the areas of staffing, collection, and seating. Special provision to meet the unique needs of the community college student through library instruction and staffing is recommended. Efforts by instructors to integrate library use and course work, aside from reserve books, are unimpressive, and their efforts to encourage general reading are negligible. Provision for required adequate library instruction, rather than the traditional orientation to new facilities (which assumes general knowledge of library techniques and resources) is therefore essential. A library instruction course should be required of all new full-time community college students, and library orientation should be provided for others. At least two staff members, one of whom is a librarian, should be on duty whenever the library is open to its public. There should be at least two librarians on the staff of every community college library. Clerical personnel, rather than students, should be assigned to circulation desk duty.

Community college library planning should include the provision of a basic collection of at least 20,000 titles, fully cataloged and processed, ready for classes. The community college library program should be developed to provide for *all* of the needs of its students and most of its faculty. The reserve system as presently conceived should be deemphasized and replaced with open reserves, course shelves, and almost no closed reserves. A new community college library should be planned to include a library classroom, open stacks to accommodate a collection of at least 30,000 volumes and other ample storage, workroom, cataloging, and office facilities, study carrels, student conference and typing rooms, browsing area or room, seating for at least 25 per cent of the anticipated full-time equivalent enrollment, and controlled, single-exit flow of traffic.

Several ideas and techniques were mentioned by library directors as possible supportive means to improve community college library programming. They felt that it is the responsibility of their group to encourage development of certain products and ideas as well as to be willing to experiment with the results. The support of the profession

HELEN WHEELER

should be given to the movement to produce an up-to-date basic bibliography for community college library collections, to secure commercial and centralized processing for all types of relevant publications, to design a package of 10,000 cataloged titles, and to produce a film suitable for community college library instruction. They felt that the audio-visual program should be housed in the library building and coordinated with the library program; there should be at least one member of the community college staff who is an audio-visual specialist and able to devote full-time to the audio-visual program. All possible techniques should be utilized to bring the student and the library together. (Although not essential to the support of a community college library program, a successful library technology program can be one contribution of some community college libraries to their institutions' unique services.)

Librarians should continue to strive toward improved library programming through membership in professional organizations and local and national activities. For their part, professional groups representing library service, the junior college, and public education should work together towards realization of their mutual goals. A joint, ongoing committee representing the American Association of Junior Colleges and the Association of College and Research Libraries would be a good start. There are implications here for schools of education and professional library service as well. Classes, workshops, conferences, and consultations should be further developed in the areas of community college library service, administration, instructional materials, and audio-visual aids. Continued progress in teacher education which is more library-minded than in the past will improve the situation at all levels of public education.

References

1. Wheeler, Helen. *The Community College Library; A Plan for Action*. Hamden, Conn., Shoe String Press, 1965.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.
3. ACRL Committee on Standards. "Standards for Junior College Libraries," *College and Research Libraries*, 21:200-206, May 1960.
4. Wheeler, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 80.