



Personnel For Junior College Libraries

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THE SIGNIFICANCE of personnel for a library program is undisputed today. Louis Wilson and Maurice Tauber, for instance, in their volume on the university library, listed "Personnel" next to "Resources for Instruction" as an element fundamental to the successful operation of a library.¹

Today library staffs in institutions of higher learning—universities, senior colleges, and junior colleges—are commonly divided into three principal categories: professional, non-professional or clerical, and student assistants. The following brief account traces the development of the library staffs in junior colleges, devoting principal attention, as the literature has, to the professional category.

It is noteworthy that the first comprehensive survey of the American junior college gives only scant attention to the library. In the index to this pioneering investigation by Leonard Koos, published in 1924, are only a few references relating to the library.² The role and training of the librarian are not even mentioned. Only seven years later the library receives quite systematic consideration by Walter Eells in a textbook.³ As an illustration of the rapid increase in esteem of the library, Eells compares the standards of the American Association of Junior Colleges adopted in March 1922 with the revised statement of standards of this Association adopted at Atlantic City in November 1929. The standards of 1922 required merely that a very modest book stock be maintained. The 1929 library standards of the American Association of Junior Colleges increased the book requirements, but above all provided that a trained librarian shall be in charge of the library.⁴ This requirement, as spelled out in part of Standard X reads:

The library shall be in charge of a full-time librarian with the same qualifications and educational background as a teacher in the junior college, including from twenty-four to thirty semester hours in an approved library school or equivalent in specific training for library. An adequate number of assistants shall be provided.⁵

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Parenthetically it may be noted that the American Association of Junior Colleges was not a "standardizing agency" except in territory where no accrediting agencies took account of the junior college. A consideration of these standards is nevertheless pertinent to the discussion since they represented the view of what should be attainable at that time.

The Carnegie Corporation which in the 1930's distributed funds to junior colleges for the acquisition of books insisted that their libraries meet some broadly outlined requirements if they wished to receive financial support. The expectations of the Carnegie Corporation were reflected in its standards.⁶ In the personnel area, the Carnegie standards note in general terms that the librarian must be involved in the educational program and be as much concerned with educational as with administrative matters. They prescribe further that librarians be considered members of the educational staff and receive corresponding recognition in terms of salary, tenure, and advancement. The standards are not specific as to the number of librarians needed in the libraries of various sizes nor do they elaborate on distinctions between professional and non-professional staffs.

Most significant are the efforts of the junior college librarians themselves to gain recognition and professional status. The Junior College Libraries Round Table (predecessor to the Junior College Libraries Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries) was organized in 1930 and had as one of its principal objectives the development of standards for book stock, book budget, and staff. Regarding personnel, the recommended 1930 standards required two professional staff members for an institution with up to 500 students, and correspondingly larger staffs for institutions with larger enrollments, together with student help and clerical assistance. As to status, the person designated as head librarian should be equal in rank with the full professor and department head, and the other members of the professional library staff should be on par with the academic grade just below the department head, and with no less than the grade of instructor.⁷

These recommended standards were debated and evaluated by the library profession in succeeding years. Surveys and other studies were undertaken so that comparisons could be made between practices and desired goals. During certain periods, the movement to perfect standards and to have them adopted was strong and during other periods—such as the war years—efforts were in abeyance.⁸ But it persisted.

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Finally in 1960 the efforts of the library profession came to fruition with the adoption of a formal set of "Standards for Junior College Libraries."⁹

Like the standards recommended in 1930, those adopted in 1960 list two professional staff members as the minimum number for even the small library. In the "1960 Standards for Junior College Libraries," the line between the professional and the non-professional categories is more sharply drawn, and the need for non-professional staff members is presented with greater urgency. While the 1960 standards demand that professional librarians should have faculty status and be fully involved in the educational program, they insist with equal force on the responsibility of the librarian to equip himself with a broad and general academic background in addition to his professional training.

Writers in the field of librarianship have consistently pointed to the central role that the junior college librarian must play. Ermine Stone in her pioneering volume on the junior college library—essentially an attempt to correlate the then existing literature—states that there is no other member on the faculty who must combine within himself as many qualities; he must be teacher, administrator, and bookman.¹⁰ As a corollary, the librarian must be accorded academic status with the rank of full professor and department head. She notes also that a librarian must have academic training comparable to that of other (teaching) faculty members.

Stone comments on a condition which would seem very strange to us today. She deplores that sometimes there are several coordinate librarians if a staff comprises several professional members. She feels—as we commonly do today—that one person should be placed in charge of the library and be responsible for its administration.

William W. Bishop was Chairman of the Advisory Group on Junior College Libraries, of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, when in a 1935 article he described the then current situation and his future expectations.¹¹ From thorough familiarity with the junior college library field, he became convinced that the librarian ". . . is the one vital element in the solution of the junior college library problem . . ." ¹² and that there exists the highest possible correlation between the training and personality of the junior college librarian and the efficiency in the management of the junior college library. He insisted that the person employed as a junior college librarian be professionally well-trained. Bishop recommended a course in junior college library administra-

tion as especially valuable. A note by the editor of the *Junior College Journal* shows that Bishop was as yet unaware of the fact that since 1929 such a course, open to second year students, had been offered at the University of California.

Of great significance to the junior college library field were the practices at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, which have been described in accounts by the president, the librarian, and various members of the faculty.¹³ At Stephens College teachers and librarians form one single instructional staff. Librarians are heavily involved in class work and in matters of curriculum. To emphasize this unity B. Lamar Johnson, the long-time head librarian of Stephens College, was also designated by the college administration as the dean of instruction. Such an arrangement cannot leave any doubt whatever that the librarian is a teacher. After he became a professor of higher education at the University of California, Johnson advocated, as he had in earlier writings also, that the librarian's position always be a major one on the instructional staff. In a study published in 1952, he could point to many instances in which the librarian held a key position.¹⁴

The task of tracing developments and discovering trends in the junior college library personnel area is further aided by the analysis of a number of surveys. A comprehensive survey based on questionnaire returns was prepared by members of the Junior College Libraries Round Table in 1931.¹⁵ Since only 30 per cent of the librarians responded and since some of these returns were partial, the findings can be only "roughly indicative" of the situation.¹⁶ Noteworthy for this period was the preponderance of librarians who were attached to libraries serving both a high school and a junior college over those libraries serving junior colleges exclusively. Also significant was the professional experience of the librarians prior to appointment to junior college positions. Most librarians had had their experience in public libraries, with experience in school and college libraries ranking second and third, respectively.¹⁷ The survey notes that from the available data:

. . . one may jump to the conclusion that the typical junior college librarian is a woman with an A.B. degree and some technical training, not equal to one year in an accredited library school. She has had public library experience and has held her present position four years. She has no full-time assistants, but has some unpaid part-time help. Perhaps more adequate data will brighten this picture.¹⁸

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Another survey, also based on incomplete returns, formed the basis of a book by Harlen M. Adams. This author noted that many junior colleges have been established on high school campuses and that therefore the character of their library staffs had necessarily been influenced by this situation. Adams mentions that in California, for instance, forty-nine of fifty-three librarians who submitted returns had some training in teaching and twenty-four held a general secondary teaching credential. Another comment by Adams on his findings is that the number of subprofessional assistants is decidedly limited.¹⁹

Of several surveys which are restricted to individual states, two may be singled out as indicative of the larger national picture. A 1939 report on California junior college libraries by Elizabeth Neal²⁰ stated that 73 per cent of the librarians had a bachelor's degree, a year of professional training, and two years of library experience, and that all had teacher's status. She pointed out as a situation to be corrected that the librarian was not given professional assistants but had to rely on student help.

In a report dealing with Texas junior colleges, also issued in 1939, Mary Clay noted that the librarians had the required general and professional training, but they too lacked professional assistants.²¹ Among those responding only one institution could be found which had a degree-holding assistant in addition to the head librarian.

The surveys and other writings examined agree that junior college librarians need a broad general academic background as well as thorough professional training. Two studies, both published in 1952, deal with certain aspects of this problem.

Punke, whose goal was to discover the actual background of professional junior college staff members, based his analysis on information derived from catalogs of 125 junior colleges which were chosen to include at least eight institutions from each of the nine major geographical divisions of the U.S.²² The author gives returns for public, private, and church related institutions as well as combined figures. As a group, he feels, the junior college librarians have not yet reached a sufficiently high level of training. He admonishes his colleagues to strive toward being on par educationally with those engaged in formal teaching.

The second article, by Mary Clay, concentrated on the particular needs of the administrative librarian.²³ She spoke as a member of the Committee on Preparation and Qualifications of College Librarians of the Association of College and Reference Librarians, a Division of

the American Library Association. Her recommendations, based on a poll conducted among only sixteen junior college librarians attending the Junior College Section meeting of the American Library Association Regional Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1951, are concerned with pre-professional, professional, and continuing education. It is not surprising that in the area of pre-professional training a broad general background was stressed and that in the professional program a course in junior college education was deemed a most important elective. While the sample of those polled is not large enough to present these findings as the views of the profession, they are worth noting as the composite opinion of a number of well-informed junior college librarians.

In a recent investigation, the present writer showed that the profession is coming closer to the goals it has sought for years.²⁴ The findings of this study reveal that practically all professional librarians have usually—although not in all instances—faculty status. The faculty salary scale, perhaps the most important indicator of faculty status, in most cases applies to the junior college librarians. As a rule, the librarians are drawn into the educational process and share in the shaping of educational policies by serving on pertinent faculty committees. Usually, the librarians are high on the hierarchical ladder, reporting—although again not in all instances—to the highest officer of the college. Since all head librarians perform some administrative functions the question arises whether these are so numerous that the librarian should be classed as an administrator and be included in the special, usually higher, administrative pay schedule. This question has not been uniformly answered even within individual states.²⁵

Library salary trends can be traced with the aid of *Library Statistics*, a publication issued by the U.S. Office of Education.²⁶ While this is probably the most detailed source, other compilations prepared by the U.S. Office of Education should also prove helpful. The reports entitled *Higher Education Salaries*,²⁷ for instance, might be consulted to advantage if librarians' salaries are to be compared with those received by other college instructors and administrators. Similarly useful are the biennially published salary studies of the National Education Association.²⁸

As may be expected, the *Junior College Journal* carries important editorial comment as well as detailed articles on salaries, sometimes with particular reference to the junior college librarians' position within the administrative salary structure.²⁹

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From an examination of these and other salary studies, it is evident that the financial situation of junior college library staffs has improved over the years just as the financial position of faculties in general has improved; that, as a group, librarians employed by institutions under public control have been receiving higher pay than those in institutions under private control; and that usually the pay differential between the junior college head librarian's salary and that of subordinate professional staff members is small.

From the limited experience so far gained it may be expected that the professional librarians will be assigned ranks in the same way as their colleagues engaged in class room teaching. Faculty rank, characterized by the titles of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor and professor, is still the exception rather than the rule in junior colleges. But the number of institutions which rank their faculty is increasing steadily.³⁰

As a corollary to the demand that the junior college librarian be given faculty status and rank, it has been urged with equal force that he be given the opportunity to devote himself mainly to professional tasks. Walter C. Eells, for instance, writing in 1940, urged that junior college librarians be free to serve in professional capacities, for instance as counselors and educational consultants. The librarians' energies, Eells stressed, should not be absorbed by custodial and clerical tasks.³¹

Considerable progress has been made in terms of employment of full-time clerical assistants. Yet many institutions, especially in the enrollment categories of "under 500" and "500-999," are still lacking full-time library clerks.³²

Once the principle has been established that clerks are necessary components of junior college library staffs, questions such as the following will arise: What should be the ratio of the non-professional to the professional staff, and what should be the clerks' compensation, their hours of work, and their preparation?³³

A growing number of librarians feel that staffs would be enriched by an "in-between" category. Non-professional personnel can be more effective in performing library operations if they are systematically trained before hiring. For this reason the library technician or library aide category has been recommended. Since the graduate library schools do not provide instruction for the training of this category, this responsibility has been largely assumed by junior colleges. The aides who undergo library technician's training at junior colleges do

not necessarily intend to work in junior college libraries. They may seek a position in any type of a library. Even though the library technician category has not gained a firm foothold yet, the library technician programs deserve special attention, for it will be the junior college librarians with particular teaching skill who will act as the instructors of the library technician courses. The reactions to the library aide or technician programs have been generally favorable.³⁴ To assure a steady flow of non-professional persons who will undergo this training, it will be necessary to reward library technicians by assigning a proper position title, by added authority and, in particular, by financial increments.

Student assistants have always formed an integral part of the junior college library's staff. In 1940, when Harlen M. Adams published his survey, 97 per cent of the junior colleges responding to his inquiry utilized students.³⁵ Returns of a recent inquiry present a similar picture.³⁶ As in the past there is great variety in employment and service patterns. It is obvious that student aides are indispensable in institutions which have only one full-time staff member. As was mentioned previously, many of the smaller junior colleges have only one-man libraries. Here the student must be especially versatile since he is likely to be entrusted with jobs which in other libraries would be assigned to a clerk or even a professional assistant.

The Adams study shows that compensation received by students differed as between institutions, but money paid directly to the student ranked first. Non-financial forms of recognition such as academic credits, service points and merits were also found in a considerable number of cases. Today financial compensation has become practically the rule with other forms of recognition occurring rarely.

Students will become more valuable assistants if they are well-acquainted with the essentials of their job. To attain this objective, training—ranging from the rudimentary to the elaborate—is offered in nearly all libraries. A systematic, comprehensive approach will usually be reflected in the attainment of a higher level of performance on the part of the students.³⁷

In hiring and in training students, the librarian must always keep in mind the help he can obtain from the student aides in the operation of the library. However, as an educator and as a member of the faculty, he may never neglect the opportunity to enrich the student's general background and to reinforce a student's sometimes latent desire to choose librarianship as a career.

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