Two-Year College Library Standards

JAMES O. WALLACE

THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE is a distinctively American contribution to higher education. At present more than fifty years after the organization of the American Association of Junior Colleges in 1920, the role of these colleges in American higher education continues to be redefined as they seek to meet new demands placed upon them. In such dynamic institutions the difficulties inherent in providing for learning resources adequately, as the basic institutional objectives change requires that standards be reviewed, even rewritten, more frequently than for other types of academic institutions. The two-year colleges are also unique in that the latest document was developed and endorsed cooperatively by three national associations. This latest achievement indicates the most recent trend in two-year college standards.

The curriculum in the first junior colleges to be established was limited usually to the provision of courses parallel and directly comparable to those offered in senior colleges and universities in the freshman and sophomore years. No real difference in this regard can be found between those junior colleges which developed as upward extensions of a high school and those which from the beginning were organized as lower division colleges. Both types of junior colleges had their advocates during the earlier years; this conflict in the question of identification with secondary or with higher education had an effect on library development.

The upward extension of the high school to include the first two years of college most frequently occurred in public high schools where other public institutions of higher education were not easily accessible. Such junior colleges were identified administratively with the high school. The public school codes of the various states governed the organization, finances, and operations of these junior colleges. Since the same instructors were frequently utilized in both high school and junior

James O. Wallace is Librarian, San Antonio College, San Antonio, Texas.

OCTOBER, 1972

[219]
college, they tended to instruct both groups of students using the same teaching methods and procedures, emphasizing textbook study. Library services and facilities were shared, usually administered by a single librarian without clerical assistance. Library regulations were based on the needs of the much larger group of high school students, to the detriment of the more mature junior college students. William Warner Bishop expressed the result: "It is not too much to say that at present the junior college libraries as a group fall far short of efficiency, either in service or in books. This deficiency is one of the most serious counts against the junior college as it now exists." As long as the junior college was a part of secondary education, this 1929 indictment remained substantially correct. The early concern for quantitative standards was an attempt to remedy the situation.

The establishment of independent junior colleges governed by their own boards of trustees provided the historical justification for the term "junior college" to identify such two-year institutions. Initially most of these were privately-controlled, financed independently or by a religious denomination. Such institutions often occupied a separate campus with dormitory facilities. The faculty in such institutions had no difficulty in identifying themselves with other segments of higher education and in demanding corresponding resources. In the classroom they stressed lecture and outside reading assignments instead of depending upon textbook study. More extensive resources were needed to meet the needs of their resident students, frequently isolated from other libraries. Although the pattern of the two-year college housed on its own campus and controlled by its own board provided the example which became dominant among public two-year colleges after 1950, it was the leadership and example of the private colleges which led to the establishment of the earlier two-year college standards.

During the last decade the public community college has emerged as the typical two-year institution. While these are still known as junior colleges for historical reasons, they are actually a different type of institution; the recent name change of the American Association of Junior Colleges in February 1972 to the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges dramatically demonstrates this. The junior college is dominated by a curriculum designed to be articulated into a degree from a senior college or university; the community college philosophy accepts this curriculum as merely one kind coequal with provision for vocational and technical education, adult education, and meeting other needs of community citizens of postsecondary school age. Among the
Two-Year College Libraries

factors which have produced this philosophical change have been: (1) the acceptance of the place of the two-year college as a part of higher education rather than as part of secondary education, (2) the development of separate public college districts as distinct educational entities, (3) the movement of two-year colleges to separate campuses resulting in the creation of new learning resource centers designed to meet college requirements, (4) the creation of statewide systems which provides better financial support for instruction, including learning resources, (5) the increased emphasis on vocational and technical education with acceptance of these in the community college as equal to the academic programs, (6) the effect of new concepts of general education upon the curriculum, and (7) the significance of community control upon the institution. The emergence of the community college concept, as well as having implications for library standards, has had major significance for the development of library and audiovisual services directed towards meeting the needs of the student.

Although only private and public junior and community colleges have been mentioned thus far, the two-year college includes any post-secondary institution offering one or two years of instruction as part of higher education. Among these other institutions are the technical institutes where emphasis is entirely on the development of job-related skills for adults and where liberal arts courses may be nonexistent. Application of standards developed at the more numerous junior and community colleges will require discrimination because their requirements for learning resources are quite different. Another variant which requires very little modification of standards, except in terms of control, is the two-year branch or extension center of a senior institution.

The earliest quantitative statements applicable to junior colleges emanated from the American Council on Education and the American Association of Junior Colleges. While neither statement went beyond minimal quantitative figures of 8,000 volumes in the first instance and 3,500 volumes in the second (which also required an annual expenditure of not less than $500 for books), they reflected an expectation that the junior college would be a small, rather limited institution with an extremely restricted curriculum. Neither reflected professional judgments of librarians.

In 1930 the Junior College Round Table, predecessor within ALA of the Junior College Libraries Section, prepared a preliminary statement of quantitative standards. This statement was amplified by Ermine Stone; the revised statement was approved and published in 1932.
Recommended were a minimum collection of 10,000 volumes for 500 or fewer students, 15,000 volumes for up to 1,000 students, and 20,000 volumes for more than 1,000 students. Two professional librarians were recommended, but there was no mention of clerical staff. The budget was to provide $5.00 per student for materials. Although these modest requirements did provide some information to personnel of two-year colleges, the impact of these standards was negligible, with the possible exception of their use as the source of two quantitative figures in the 1960 standards.

In 1934 the Carnegie Corporation of New York created an advisory group on junior college libraries. This group made the first comprehensive study of the condition of libraries in two-year colleges and supported several other studies which resulted in several significant publications. Included among these was the first bibliography of appropriate books for two-year colleges. In 1937 the corporation made direct grants to ninety-two junior colleges for the purchase of library materials. Although these activities did not have direct relationship to the development of standards, indirectly they provided incentives to the institutions which met their modest requirements for grants to improve the quality of library services. The movement for more comprehensive junior college library standards began among the librarians in these institutions.

The standards of today had their roots at the ALA annual conference in Los Angeles in 1953. The Junior College Libraries Section voted there to establish a committee to develop a statement of evaluative standards for junior college libraries. Formulator of the action was Ruth E. Scarborough, librarian of the Centenary College for Women in Hackerstown, New Jersey, then chairman of the section. Scarborough has since served as a member of all subsequent junior college standards committees. After several years of work the committee presented its report at the annual conference at Miami Beach in 1956. The committee, with Ruth Bradley as chairwoman, made profitable use of several sets of quantitative standards which had been developed by state organizations, California in particular. Library activities in the two-year colleges in that state were then far in advance of other states; California's experiences contributed materially to the quality of the 1956 standards. Among the features of the document were provisions for supportive staff, the relation of size of professional staff to enrollment, and the distinction between size of the collection essential for accreditation and that adequate for an established institution.
Two-Year College Libraries

Although the 1956 standards were approved by the Junior College Libraries Section, they never received approval by the Association of College and Research Libraries and were never published except in mimeographed format. Instead the ACRL Board referred them to the Committee on Standards in 1959. This committee, under the chairmanship of Felix E. Hirsch had worked for several years on the "Standards for College Libraries." With the addition to the committee of several librarians informed on developments in two-year colleges, a new set of parallel standards was written and published in May 1960, as "Standards for Junior College Libraries."6

These standards constitute a professional landmark. With their approval there was for the first time a national definition of library services for an established two-year college. The pattern was also set that standards for a type of academic institution, in this case junior colleges, should be developed by a committee including informed representatives of other types of academic libraries. Other significant statements included a formula for the size of the book collection based on a minimum of 20,000 volumes with an additional 5,000 volumes for each 500 students after the first 1,000. While this quantitative figure was and remains controversial, experience has supported this computation for most two-year institutions. The achievement of the committee in meeting its assigned responsibility was a document which proved extremely useful in improving library services to parallel the expansion of the community college movement in the subsequent decade. In this it succeeded in reaching the goal stated by Hirsch: "In their definitive version the standards are meant to give junior college librarians a readable, carefully reasoned document that they can present to their authorities and to community leaders when they want to give them a better understanding of the place the library should occupy in the modern junior college, and to plead with them for more vigorous financial support. The standards should also make useful reading for junior college faculties."7

Controversy developed around the 1960 standards almost as soon as they were published. There is some evidence that they perplexed many junior college presidents and deans, disturbed and challenged librarians who had accepted the status quo in their own isolated institutions, and confused accrediting associations where all standards were interpreted as minimal. Some of the objections had been anticipated by the standards committee: "It would be unreasonable to assume that the new standards will please everybody. They will disturb some intransi-
gent administrators who do not grasp the paramount importance of a well-stocked and well-functioning library for a good junior college. They may not appeal to some conservative librarians either who are absorbed in their special problems, be they regional or local. But the Committee on Standards hopes that its efforts will be appreciated by those educators and librarians who consider strong junior college libraries vital for the progress of American higher education in the 1960’s.8

The most significant objection dealt with the authority of ALA to issue standards applicable to junior colleges independent of participation of junior college administrators and without consulting the AAJC. At that time there were no official channels of communication between the two associations. In fact, the AAJC did not have any contacts on the national level with any faculty segments. After learning of this concern by administrators, the Junior College Libraries Section and the Committee on Standards of the ALA sent official representatives to the AAJC Denver Convention in March 1962 to discuss the standards further. The immediate results of this contact were negative as far as standards were concerned, but a foundation was laid which was to be significant in later developments and in relationships between the associations.

A second concern was with the nature of standards. In the minds of most administrators the accreditation process and the standards were synonymous; to them the only valid and acceptable standards were those of the regional accrediting associations because they were compelled to meet these. Since the quantitative figures used, especially the requirement of a minimum of two librarians (first stated in the 1932 standards) and the 20,000 volume collection, were far greater than required by the accrediting associations and, indeed, were above the level of most junior college libraries at that time, there was a fear that members of accreditation teams would utilize the standards as part of their evaluation of the institution. According to occasional reports it appears that there were instances when the 1960 standards were misunderstood and misapplied by accreditation teams.

Another objection dealt with the subjectivity with which the qualitative criteria could be applied. In retrospect it must be recognized that it was difficult for any institution to apply the standards and state absolutely: “we have met the standards.” B. Lamar Johnson, one of the best-informed professionals in the junior college field with experience both as a librarian and as an administrator, voiced this objection: “Because of the qualitative and subjective nature of most of the criteria
Two-Year College Libraries

included in Standards for Junior College Libraries, difficulties will inevitably be encountered in applying the criteria to specific libraries. Conclusions regarding the quality of the book collection and of its relevance to the educational program of a particular college must, for example, largely be based upon subjective judgment. Likewise, standards for evaluating the effectiveness of library service are not objectively defined.

A final objection raised was that the criteria were too ambitious for small, private college libraries. Presidents of such junior colleges, and some small public colleges as well, insisted that their institutions could not afford the cost of such elaborate libraries and questioned the need for them.

The 1960 standards can be credited with some real accomplishments which, at least in part, contributed to library development in two-year colleges. First, continuing and direct communication between the AAJC and ALA developed as representatives of the two organizations discussed standards and other mutual concerns. Second, the 20,000 volume norm for the book collection did result in larger, more adequate library collections. Comparison between statistics of junior colleges before 1960 and those for 1970 show a significant increase in number of libraries exceeding this amount. Third, the use of the quantitative norm by the U.S. Office of Education in evaluating deficiencies in the book collection and for allowing points for supplemental grants under Title IIA of the Higher Education Act undoubtedly resulted in larger expenditures for library materials in junior colleges, further improving the potentials for such libraries to meet their objectives. Finally, the standards provided an administrative pattern for the junior colleges that was to accelerate change in library services.

During the past decade the 1960 standards have been used extensively for self-evaluation, for budget and institutional planning, and for guidance of administrative officers and librarians in understanding the purposes and role of services in meeting institutional instructional objectives. As a professional document they have had an impact outside the library profession that has been greater than most other statements of ALA, except those relating to censorship and freedom of access to materials. Certainly the parallel document, "Standards for College Libraries," has not had the impact or the wide general acceptance which had been accorded the junior college standards by the end of the 1960s.

However, criticisms of the 1960 standards became more significant as developments in community colleges and in higher education made
them more obsolete. Among those items which the pioneer document
did not reflect were such developments as the improved administrative
status of librarians (many were now recognized as deans of library ser-
vices or of learning resources), the acceptance of the concept of the
merger of library and audiovisual services to meet instructional needs
in learning resources centers, and the impact of multi-campus districts.
Instructional experimentation with programmed learning laboratories
and autotutorial methods of instructions, the use of closed-circuit tele-
vision and computers for instruction and services, the development of
state systems of two-year colleges and other forms of cooperative en-
deavors, and similar changes were not covered. Before the end of the
decade it was clear that new directions had to be found.

During the decade there were other activities related to the 1960
standards. For example, a committee of the Junior College Libraries
Section prepared and published what was essentially an interpretation
of the standards as they related to a new college. The resulting “Guide-
lines for Establishing Junior College Libraries” sought to provide for
the new president or administrator some rationale and a timetable
which could be utilized early in the development of a new institution.10
State library associations also prepared interpretations of the stan-
dards; most frequently these augmented or expanded the quantitative
aspects of the standards. This was the case, for example, in Texas.11
Original ground was broken in California in 1969 with the publication
by the California Junior College Association of Suggestions for Devel-
oping Junior College Libraries. This document contained formulas ap-
plicable to all junior colleges of 1,500 or more students. The formulas
for staffing were definitely the best published in any state. The weakest
aspects of these formulas were those applying to audiovisual services.12

To discuss the next development in two-year college standards it will
be necessary to return to the development after the 1960 standards
were issued. As mentioned earlier, there was contact made between
representatives of the ALA and the AAJC in 1962 at Denver. Out of
this came the Washington Conference on Strengthening Library Ser-
vices in Junior Colleges in February 1964, sponsored by the Council on
Library Resources. A second meeting with equal representation from
the two associations in Walnut, California, in May 1965, and including
both presidents, developed a number of recommendations for joint proj-
ects of the associations, including one for the appointment of a joint
permanent committee and another for the reexamination of the stan-
dards.
Two-Year College Libraries

As a result of the recommendation of the joint committee, an ad hoc committee was appointed in January 1966 to examine the 1960 standards in detail to determine their need for revision. This committee submitted a lengthy report in June 1966 recommending that revision be undertaken. Among the recommendations were areas needing strengthening and further definition, areas needing expansion, and recognition of a number of studies which had been published.

With the endorsement of the joint committee, the ACRL Board authorized the appointment of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on the Revision of the Junior College Library Standards in February 1967, with James O. Wallace, San Antonio College, as chairman. The committee included representation by AAJC in addition to the assistant executive director of that association. A majority of the members of the committee were junior college librarians.

A preliminary draft of revised standards was prepared by the chairman to be used at an open hearing at the 1968 midwinter meeting to provide further guidance to the committee. After the meeting a further draft was prepared for use at the 1968 annual conference, but the members felt some concern about the integration of media programs into the standards in regard to learning resources centers. With the school media standards under development by the American Association of School Librarians and the Division of Audiovisual Instruction, it was felt that the latter organization should also be participating. At the 1969 midwinter meeting the executive secretary of DAVI met with the subcommittee; at this time an invitation was issued to DAVI to participate. The invitation was accepted, but, to everyone's regret, the designated representative did not participate. The subcommittee held a three-day meeting in San Antonio, Texas, in November 1969, and completed what was essentially the final draft.

Two public hearings were held on the new standards document, known in its final form as "AAJC-ACRL Guidelines for Two-Year College Library Learning Resource Centers" (hereafter called the 1971 joint guidelines). The first of these was at the 1970 annual conference of ALA in Atlantic City; the second at the 1971 AAJC convention. The joint committee had specified that final approvals would follow the public hearings. After the publication of the final draft in October 1971, final approval of these guidelines, replacing the 1960 standards, was given in Chicago in January 1972.

A number of major decisions were reflected in the 1971 joint guidelines. One of these was the recognition of a standard as something mea-
surable, enforceable, and directly related to library goals. A guideline, on the other hand, suggested a level of performance for self-evaluation. This concept was accepted by the ALA Committee on Standards in their first draft of “ALA Standards Manual” in January 1972, which defined an ALA standard as “A rule or model of quantity, quality, extent, level, or correctness, approved by a unit of ALA, endorsed by the ALA Standards Committee, and promulgated by the Association, as a gauge by which the degree of attainment of official ALA Goals can be measured.” ALA guidelines were defined as “A suggested level of performance or adequacy approved by a unit of ALA, reviewed by the ALA Standards Committee, and endorsed by the Association as a desired direction of development, not having the force of an ALA Standard, nor the commitment of an ALA Goal, but including practical methods of procedure and self-evaluation that will lead to future formulation of ALA Standards and Goals.”

Another decision was the determination that quantitative figures would not be included in the document because adequate research had not been available to support such figures. The inability of the committee with the limited resources available to it, to develop quantitative standards will undoubtedly be the strongest criticism made of it. It was felt, however, that the limitation was more than counterbalanced by the specific qualitative criteria included. Quantitative figures used indiscriminately by groups external to the institution had been one of the severest criticisms of the 1960 standards.

Possibly the most noticeable change from the 1960 standards was the emphasis upon the administrative unification of print and audiovisual services in learning resources centers. Provision of a fuller range of audiovisual responsibilities including provision for production, for television facilities, and for campus distribution services, as well as operation of a variety of learning facilities away from a central facility, is a new feature of the 1971 joint guidelines.

As is stressed in the introduction and in the title, the 1971 joint guidelines were made applicable to community colleges, technical institutes, and other two-year colleges as well as to the traditional junior colleges. They were also intended for established institutions for self-evaluation and planning, rather than for new institutions not yet accredited.

At the annual ALA conference, the ACRL Committee on Standards voted to review the guidelines annually because of the changes occurring in two-year colleges. At the time that this was voted (1971) no one
realized how prophetic this position really was. Even before the final approval of the 1971 joint guidelines by the ACRL board and the AAJC-ACRL joint committee (which speaks for AAJC) a new draft had already been prepared.

The executive director of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (formerly DAVI) was present at the forum at the AAJC convention in Washington in March 1971, when the 1971 joint guidelines were given their public hearing. At the meeting and in subsequent discussions he asked about joint participation of his association in the guidelines development. This was acceptable to the two other associations, and preliminary steps are currently underway to expand the joint committee from two to three participating associations.

AECT had already begun a project to review standards for all types of educational institutions. Task forces for this purpose had already been appointed, including Task Force #3 on the two-year college with George Ingham as chairman. The suggestion was made that this task force, enlarged to include representatives from the ad hoc subcommittee, might provide the first revision of the 1971 joint guidelines, incorporating changes in the educational technology field since 1969. The suggestion was accepted. In meetings in Washington, D.C., in October and December, 1971, a revised draft was prepared. This 1972 tripartite document is the "Guidelines for Two-year College Learning Resources Programs." It has already received approval from all three associations, subject to final editorial scrutiny and to approval of the ALA Committee on Standards. Plans include publication both by ALA (probably in College & Research Libraries News) and by AECT (probably in Audiovisual Instruction) as soon as possible.

Major change in the 1972 tripartite guidelines is the emphasis on a program rather than on a geographic concept of learning resources. Learning resources are recognized as being involved in all aspects of the instructional process, from instructional development, production, and the acquisition of materials, to the provision of services to the individual and the classroom.

Provisions for traditional library services have been expanded to include provision for acquisition, organization, distribution, and utilization of the newer media under the centralized administrative responsibility of a chief administrator with the stature of a dean or a vice-president "selected on the basis of acquired competencies which relate to the purposes of the program, educational achievement, administrative abil-
JAMES O. WALLACE

ity, community and scholarly interests, professional activities, and service orientation.”

The 1972 guidelines are arranged in six sections: (1) objectives and purposes, (2) organization and administration, (3) budget, (4) instructional system components, (5) services, and (6) interagency cooperative activities. In each section a number of specific criteria are stated which could be evaluated by an institution to determine whether each criterion has or has not been met, perhaps concluding that it does not apply to a particular type of two-year college. Each criterion is stated affirmatively, accompanied by an explanatory paragraph to clarify it. An introduction, a statement of the role of the learning resources program, and a glossary preceded the list of criteria.

The significance of the 1972 guidelines lies in the participation of three associations in their development. While both the school media standards and the 1971 joint guidelines had been prepared by two associations, no previous set of library standards had been sponsored by three. The very speed with which they were formulated and accepted adds to their significance. Contrasted to the slow progress of the 1971 joint guidelines in obtaining approval, the 1972 guidelines will be approved for publication in a matter of months. Several factors made this possible: (1) essential agreement with the philosophy of the 1971 joint guidelines, (2) willingness to cooperate on the part of all concerned, (3) financial support provided by AECT and ACRL for meetings to draft changes, (4) familiarity with developments in two-year colleges, (5) participation and membership of many librarians in AECT, and (6) the groundwork for cooperation created by the American Association of School Libraries. Under such circumstances the 1972 guidelines cannot but have an impact as soon as published.

With the changing role of the two-year college in education, it seems certain that other changes will be made and other revisions undertaken within a few years. The Junior College Libraries Section has recommended that a permanent Subcommittee of the Committee on Standards be created to review the guidelines on a regular annual basis now that the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Revision of the Junior College Standards has completed its assignment and has been discharged. There is need for the development of quantitative standards for various types and sizes of two-year institutions based upon research. Statistics to support such research must be gathered in a useful form. Other research is needed to confirm the effect upon the educational program when adequate learning resources are provided. With emphasis in the
Two-Year College Libraries

two-year college upon accountability based in turn upon objectives, the selection of valid measurements needed for management also remains unresolved by research.

In summary, it can be said that unusual progress has been made in the development of standards for two-year college libraries and learning resources programs in two-year colleges; the guidelines developed provide a pattern for the institution with maximum flexibility in terms of internal structure, variance in institutional objectives, and application to institutional planning. These developments have implications for other types of libraries, especially the public four-year college, and for library education in meeting the need for the diversified staff of two-year institutions, but these cannot be explored within the scope of this brief article.

References

5. “Recommended National Standards of the Junior College Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries, American Library Association, June 1956.” (Mimeographed)

October, 1972
JAMES O. WALLACE


