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## Extended Campus Library Services: Guidelines or Standards?

LYNN LABRAKE-HARRISON

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### ABSTRACT

EXTENDED CAMPUS LIBRARY service is a rapidly growing and evolving aspect of librarianship. Off-campus academic programs continue to proliferate both in number and variety. The awareness of the importance of library services to extended campus programs has heightened. Emphasis on quality and effectiveness of extended campus library service is also increasing.

The latest review of the *ACRL Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services* was completed in 1989, and the revision was approved in January 1990. This article will describe the process of the review, consider some of the issues that were raised, and also respond to the question that standards might be more appropriate than guidelines.

### REVIEW OF 1981 GUIDELINES

In July 1987, the ACRL Board of Directors established a task force to review the 1981 *Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Service*. Task force members were Mary Joyce Pickett (Chair), Lynn LaBrake, Barton Lessin, Colleen Power, and Julie Todaro. The task force was formed to determine if a revision was needed, and, if it was, to identify areas for revision, prepare successive drafts, hold hearings on the proposed revisions, publish a draft in *College & Research Libraries News* for comments, and submit a final draft to the standards and accreditation committee for review and approval.

Lynn LaBrake-Harrison, University of Central Florida, P.O. Box 25000, Orlando, FL 32816-0666

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The first meeting of the task force was held at the 1988 ALA Midwinter Conference in San Antonio. The group determined that an initial investigation was important in the review process because of the great diversity within the area of extended campus library services and because little was known about the use of the 1981 guidelines. The decision was made to do a literature search, contact accrediting agencies, and hold hearings prior to making the determination whether or not a revision was indicated. The literature search revealed a number of references to the 1981 guidelines. However, limited information on direct experience with the guidelines was found. Sheridan and Martin (1986) did report on a survey conducted in fall 1985 to determine the effect of the 1981 guidelines on library services, especially for continuing education and extension programs.

Contacts with the regional accreditation agencies in spring 1988 revealed that the agencies were aware of the need for changes in the area of extended campus programs. Most were in the process of, or had recently completed, revising their own evaluation criteria. The Western Association of Schools and Colleges had just published its revised *Handbook of Accreditation* in February 1988. Middle States accreditation criteria were under revision, with the expectation of substantial changes regarding off-campus library services. Southern States Commission of Colleges and Schools (1988) was making extensive revisions to their criteria for accreditation, with library support for off-campus programs being a major concern. Included with other recommended changes was the addition of a new subsection entitled "Library Resources at Off-Campus Sites" (p. 16). The New England Association of Schools and Colleges was the only group not making any changes in their current standards on library learning resources. However, they recognized the significant ongoing changes in the area which needed to be addressed and subsequently began a review in 1989.

In June 1988, inquiries were mailed to thirty-six professional accrediting agencies, along with copies of the 1981 guidelines, to determine: (1) if the agencies used the guidelines in evaluating library services to students in extended campus programs; (2) what other criteria they used in evaluating these services; and (3) how relevant they felt the ACRL guidelines were to their agency's accrediting process. Responses were received from thirteen agencies. None indicated that they used the ACRL guidelines at all. A few indicated that the guidelines might be useful or that their own guidelines were similar. One of the interesting responses came from the American Library Association Committee on Accreditation (COA) which does not use the ACRL *Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services*, nor does it use any guidelines external to those generated by the

committee. COA determined that while there were no major conflicts between their valuative criteria and the ACRL guidelines, the guidelines were somewhat more prescriptive than the COA approach. At the time, COA was considering a revision to reflect the increasing use of telecommunications in off-campus education (Pickett, 1988).

Initial hearings were held, and taped, at ALA's 1988 Annual Conference in New Orleans and at the Off-Campus Library Services Conference in Charleston, South Carolina. The response was more extensive than the task force had anticipated. Most of those present participated in the recorded discussions, and those addressing the task force gave thoughtful and valuable testimony. Of particular interest were the statements of librarians who had direct experience with the 1981 guidelines. Generally, they found them to be basically sound but offered recommendations for some changes and clarifications. In addition to the formal hearings, the task force received letters and had conversations with other interested librarians.

#### DECISION TO REVISE

Based on all the input, the task force determined that there definitely was a need to revise the 1981 guidelines. Fifteen suggestions and concerns were summarized in the task force's final report (ACRL Task Force to Review the Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services [ECLS], *Final Report*, 1989, pp. 2-3):

1. recognition that the term "non-traditional student" may have outworn its usefulness since what was traditionally non-traditional has become traditional;
2. consensus that the guidelines should concentrate on off-campus programs;
3. more emphasis on importance of providing equitable services to the extended campus community;
4. clearer definition of terms used in the guidelines;
5. clarification of the audience for whom the guidelines are intended;
6. recognition that the extended campus community does not just include students and teaching faculty but in many instances researchers and administrators;
7. clarification of the parent institution's responsibility for providing financial support;
8. the management role of the library should be more clearly spelled out;
9. in establishing programs, existing library support systems should be assessed;
10. stress importance of librarians being involved in the curriculum planning process;

11. responsibility of the library to publicize library services to faculty and students;
12. personnel section should spell out need for professional librarians;
13. recognition that providing off-campus library services has an impact on main campus library staff;
14. facilities and services sections overlapped and need to be re-examined;
15. significant examples of services which should be added include document delivery and reserves.

An initial draft was prepared for the Midwinter Conference of 1989. The task force worked diligently at three sessions during the Midwinter meeting in Washington. Interested librarians attended some or all of the meetings. The proposed revision was published in the May 1989 issue of *College & Research Libraries News* (ACRL, 1989). Hearings on the proposed revised guidelines were held at the 1989 annual conference. The final document was approved by the ALA Committee on Standards and Accreditation and ACRL Board of Directors during the 1990 Midwinter Conference in Chicago, with one change. While the change was small, it added considerable strength to the document. The version submitted to the Committee on Standards and Accreditation, without the change, was published in *College & Research Libraries News* (ACRL, 1990).

### PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES

During the revision process, the task force wrestled with many of the confusing and conflicting elements surrounding extended campus library services. It was difficult simply coming to concurrence on a definition of extended library service. The task force settled on a definition that covers "those library services offered in support of academic courses and programs available at sites removed from the main campus." The definition also includes services to students in off-campus programs where credit was earned at the main campus. However, it no longer includes services to students enrolled in courses or continuing education programs on the main campus.

Discussions ensued regarding traditional and nontraditional with respect to students and programs. The consensus was reached that the distinction between traditional and nontraditional students was no longer clear-cut and should be eliminated. However, with current advances in fiber-optic transmission, interactive television, computer applications, and other advances in technology, the distinction in regard to traditional and nontraditional methods of teaching and delivery of courses remained appropriate.

The task force was unanimous that clarification was needed regarding the roles of the parent institution, the main library

administration, and the management of the extended campus library services. The group determined that the parent institution, defined as the "institutional entity responsible for the offering of academic courses and programs off-campus," should be responsible for providing adequate funding and support. The main library administration, designated as the "library" in the guidelines, should have the overall responsibility for identifying, planning, coordinating, and overseeing the provision of library resources and service for off-campus programs. The importance of having a librarian responsible for library programs was stressed.

The task force soon discovered the need for a balance between demands for stricter control and the need for flexibility. During the working sessions when a proponent for a stronger statement spoke out, another would point out the problems that would occur because of the change. Invariably, their reasons were logical and justifiable. The diversity of off-campus situations is so broad that care was needed to ensure that the guidelines were strong but flexible enough to accommodate varied programs.

One of the most heated discussions evolved over the issue of free or fee for services. Some felt that all library services for the distant learner should be provided at no cost to the student. Others were strongly opposed. It was decided that these decisions should be made at the institutional level.

### USES FOR GUIDELINES

Early in the deliberations, the task force addressed the question of uses for the guidelines. The following were suggested (some enterprising librarians may be able to recommend others):

1. *Developing new programs.* The guidelines are the best tool available for those individuals responsible for developing extended campus programs. The task force recommends that copies be made available to academic administrators and that a professional librarian be given the responsibility to develop library support at the time the programs are being established. For the librarian, the guidelines are expected to be helpful for planning and implementation.
2. *Improving existing programs.* There are a significant number of librarians who are already responsible for extended campus library services who will find the guidelines helpful in their efforts to improve access to adequate collections and services, and to solicit the funding and support of the university or college administration in providing these services.
3. *Assisting accrediting agencies.* The task force felt the guidelines should be distributed to the regional and professional accrediting

agencies where they could serve a useful role for consultation and consideration when developing and applying criteria and/or standards. Promotion and endorsement of the guidelines would be required for this to occur.

4. *Assisting libraries "over-used" by students of other institutions.* A recurring issue at the ACRL discussion group concerns the proliferation of nonaccredited institutions and "diploma mills" whose students become regular users of other academic libraries. More often than not, no formal arrangements are made by these institutions. One informal survey done in a California location affirmed the librarian's conviction that outside students were putting more demands on them than their own students (Gelfand, 1988). The ACRL guidelines could be an effective tool to negotiate more formal written arrangements. These arrangements would spell out the services to be supplied and should include funding to help support those services.
5. *Increasing professional awareness of the importance of quality extended campus library services (ECLS).* And finally, the guidelines can be used to increase the awareness within academia and librarianship of the growth and variety of academic programs that extend beyond the main campus location, and the concomitant necessity for sufficient library support for these programs.

### GUIDELINES OR STANDARDS?

Suggestions have been made that ACRL issue standards for extended campus library services rather than guidelines. In order to consider which is the preferable alternative, one must first agree on the distinction. Webster's (1987) defines *guideline* as "an indication or outline (as by a government) of policy or conduct" (p. 541) and *standard* as "something set up and established by authority as a rule for the measure of quantity, weight, extent, value or quality" (p. 1148).

ACRL, in the *Standards and Accreditation Committee Policies and Procedures Manual* (1987, pp. 2-1), gives the following definitions of standards and guidelines documents:

#### *Standards Documents:*

- A. Are comprehensive, covering the range of programs and services provided by a library serving a Carnegie-classified institution.
- B. Define qualitative and quantitative criteria.
- C. Present goals toward which the profession aspires.
- D. Include statements expressed in relative terms; that is, by relating library performance to norms derived from a reference population.

- E. Guide the decisions and actions of those in the academic community concerned with the planning and administering of library services.

*Guidelines Documents:*

- A. Are program or service specific and not comprehensive.
- B. Define qualitative criteria; generally exclude quantitative criteria.
- C. Identify factors contributing to program effectiveness.
- D. Provide a framework for developing service policies and procedures.

Based on the above definitions, the major distinction is the inclusion or exclusion of quantitative measures or criteria, and the degree of comprehensiveness.

ACRL delineates three levels of standard or guideline documents (ACRL, 1987, p. 5-1). The first two are applicable to this discussion. Level 1 is labeled comprehensive and covers "all aspects of the academic library's program including governing and supporting structures, resources and services, and outcomes." The *ACRL Guidelines for Two-Year College Learning Resources Programs*, *Standards for College Libraries*, and *ACRL Standards for University Libraries* are the only documents listed. Level 2, labeled "Selected Topics," covers:

selected functions, units or aspects of the academic library are set forth with descriptions of programs, resources and outcomes as necessary. The document (1) supports the principles of a parent document; (2) defines information in depth on a chosen area or topic; and, (3) avoids replicating or paraphrasing the parent document.

The first example cited is the *ACRL Guidelines for Extended Campus Services*.

It appears that ACRL considers only Level 1 documents to be actual standards, although the word *standards* is used in the title of many which are listed as guidelines, and *guidelines* in the title of a standard.

## CASE FOR STANDARDS

Standards are more comprehensive, more qualitative, more quantitative. Standards may be perceived to have more impact and effectiveness. Kascus and Aguilar (1988, p. 34) believe that the *ACRL Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services* have less impact, and thereby are less effective, because they were issued as guidelines rather than standards. In addition, they state that a change from guidelines to standards would "underline the profession's commitment to the role of libraries in off-campus education and would

provide a common standard for responding creatively and effectively to the library needs of a wide diversity of off-campus programs" (p. 34).

In 1980, the review committee for the 1967 "Guidelines for Library Services to Extension/Noncampus Students" wrestled with a similar issue. They conducted a study to determine if the new guidelines should be general or specific, qualitative or quantitative, and should an evaluative checklist be included. The results indicated a slight overall preference for the general. However, when they studied the responses by geographic region, only the Northeast held that preference. The rest of the country supported the more specific and quantitative approach (ACRL Standards and Accreditation Committee, 1981, p. 161). When the 1980 committee submitted their revised guidelines to the Standards and Accreditation Committee for approval, they also presented an evaluative checklist (pp. 164-66).

The Library Association in Great Britain recognized similar concerns for library services to extended campus programs and students. A document entitled *Standards for University Extra-Mural Libraries* was developed in 1978 to "recommend realistic minimum standards for university extramural libraries" (The Library Association, 1978, p. 1). *Extra-mural* is the British term for off-campus or extension students. The term *internal* represents on-campus students. The *Standards for University Extra-Mural Libraries* (Library Association, 1978) was the first in a series planned to cover the various types of British extension programs. The document may be considered as a standards document since both qualitative and quantitative minimum requirements are included. While it is comprehensive for the type of program—i.e., it covers responsibilities, collections, services, staff, relationships, etc.—it would not be considered comprehensive by the ACRL definition. However, the entire series would possibly qualify as comprehensive.

## DILEMMA

The basic problems faced in the development and the revision of the guidelines would be exacerbated with the consideration of standards. One of the difficulties lies with the extensive diversity in types of extended campus programs. They range from the more traditional branch campuses to isolated individual students far removed from any campus. In between there are a variety of shared campus arrangements, academic programs held in high schools, military bases, public libraries, and even prisons. In fact, it would be difficult to describe a typical extended campus program. Some have been developed in states where urban centers are widely scattered in relatively unpopulated areas, as in Wyoming, Maine, and Canada.

These states are committed to bringing education to their people and have developed comprehensive programs in response to a need for higher education for the many students in remote locations (Johnson, 1984; Connick, 1988). The University of Central Michigan offers programs at over fifty locations throughout the country (Witucke, 1988).

In addition, there is a wide disparity in sponsoring institutions, both accredited and nonaccredited. They range from community and other two-year colleges to colleges of all types to universities. Within each of the types of institutions there are public, private, small and large, those with a broad curricula, and others with a very narrow focus. The goals and objectives of these institutions are varied. The emphasis on quality programs and the willingness and ability to provide the necessary support varies as well. Kascus and Aguilar (1988, p. 29) describe the institutions which have developed or expanded extended campus programs primarily for economic reasons. It is apparent that this trend may well continue and expand. Allocation of necessary resources to support these programs may not be adequate to support the commitments.

Library service arrangements are as varied as the types of academic programs and sponsoring institutions. The diversity is apparent in the literature and in discussions at off-campus library services conferences or ACRL extended campus discussion group meetings. The disparity exists and affects any development of guidelines or standards.

In 1981, when the Standards and Accreditation Committee reviewed the proposed revised guidelines, they approved the guidelines but rejected the evaluative checklist. The disparity in extended campus programs was one of the reasons the quantitative checklist was not approved by the Standards and Accreditation Committee. The committee felt that, with the variation in programs, it would not be possible to have a single measurement requirement (Hodowanec, 1982, p. 206).

Even The Library Association of Great Britain has not updated the 1978 standards described earlier. In a recent letter, Raymond Fisher, librarian of the University of Birmingham and chairman of the Library Association's Working Party that produced the 1978 standards, reports that: "Quantitative standards of this sort have fallen out of favor since these appeared, and it is likely that some more general guidelines will be produced in due course" (Raymond Fisher, personal communication, January 23, 1990).

Consideration might be made to expand the extended campus library services guidelines into ECLS standards, and to avoid the dilemma by the inclusion of separate quantitative sections for each

type of program. Another option might be to consider including sections covering extended campus library services in existing ACRL standards for two-year college, college, and university libraries. New dilemmas arise, however, when one considers the myriad joint-use arrangements that are springing up throughout the country. As an example, to which standards would a community college adhere when it also serves a university branch campus? Would separate standards be needed for each type of arrangement? Or could interinstitutional arrangements be adequately covered in the three standards?

### FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Many of the factors leading to the need for the current revision of the guidelines will continue to affect extended campus library service. Rapid technological developments will continue to change the delivery of classes to the distant learner. Fiber optic cabling and satellite transmission, computer applications, facsimile machines, interactive television, and innovations not yet conceived will expand the opportunities for education and for library service. The library world must be aware and take advantage of these new opportunities as they will affect future extended campus library services.

Another important factor is the increased awareness of the importance of library services for the expanding off-campus educational programs. This awareness will, as it must, escalate in the coming years as these off-campus programs continue to grow. Concomitant with this awareness will be an escalating insistence on equitable library support for the increasing number of students enrolled.

Librarians must take a leadership role in the continuing development of extended campus programs. In recognition of this need, the ACRL board endorsed the recommendations of the ACRL ECLS discussion group and the ACRL task force to review the ECLS guidelines that a standing committee or section be established. An ECLS section was approved at the 1990 ALA Midwinter meeting. The following change for the section was developed by a volunteer group from the ECLS Discussion Group during the 1989 ALA Midwinter meeting for inclusion in the recommendation to the ACRL Board.

To discuss, promote and support the off-campus library services and resources offered by academic libraries at sites removed from the traditional campus environment; to encourage cooperative program development and the sharing of expertise and resources among librarians, administrators, teaching faculty, and students; to work with other ALA groups to promote library and information services for those individuals taking and providing courses or academic programs off-campus. (S. Chipman, L. LaBrake, B. Lessin, K. O'Connor, personal communication, January 1989)

Mary Joyce Pickett (1989), chair of the task force, has aptly described appropriate projects for such a group and tied them to the goals of the ACRL strategic plan:

Our work as a task force has made us aware of several potential projects for the ECLS Section. Following are some of these projects with an indication of their relationship to goals of the ACRL Strategic Plan:

1. Development of programs and continuing education opportunities related to extended campus library services. (Goal I: contribute to total professional development of academic librarians. Subgoal A: sponsor and encourage opportunities for librarians to update existing competencies, learn requisite new skills, and gain awareness of the state of the art and Goal II: enhance the capability of libraries to serve needs of users. Subgoal D: encourage innovation in library operations and services.)
2. Development of a directory of persons working with extended campus library services. (Goal I: Subgoal B: promote a sense of professional identity and peer reinforcement among librarians.)
3. Identification of research topics related to extended campus library services. (Goal II: Subgoal C: identify, explore, and act on problems and issues facing libraries and Goal IV: promote study, research, and publication. Subgoal A: identify research topics and encourage improvement in research skills.)
4. Develop relationships with professional and regional agencies which accredit and/or license extended campus programs. Our contacts with these agencies in reviewing the guidelines indicated most were not aware of ACRL guidelines and we believe there is need for ongoing communication with the agencies. (Goal II: Subgoal A: develop standards and guidelines. Subgoal B: provide advisory services concerning academic libraries librarianship and Goal III: Subgoal A: enhance awareness of the role of academic and research libraries among non-library professionals and organizations and to develop effective working relationships with them.)

## CONCLUSIONS

This author believes that while the word *standard* may convey more authority with the nonlibrary community, the time is not yet appropriate for establishing standards in lieu of the ACRL guidelines. The most critical barriers to a transition to standards remain: (1) the requirement for quantitative criteria, and (2) the establishment of performance norms against which extended campus library service programs would be measured. The current disparity in extended campus library programs and the lack of a true global understanding of this changing area of librarianship prevent the development of either realistic quantitative measures or effective performance measures.

Continued research, development, and education is necessary. Now that the ECLS section is established, there will be the opportunity to develop the necessary knowledge and understanding of this rapidly evolving area of librarianship. The section will provide a framework for interested librarians to investigate and determine

what extended campus library programs exist, how they operate, how effective they are, what services and collections they offer, what academic programs they support, what types of interinstitutional arrangements exist, and what problems exist.

In time, when conditions are appropriate, the ECLS guidelines may evolve into standards. Such a transition was recently achieved with evolution of the *ACRL Guidelines for Two-Year-College Learning Resource Centers* into the *ACRL/AECT Standards for Community, Junior and Technical College Learning Resources Programs*. This process took five years of intensive work. And, during this time, ACRL already considered these guidelines to be standards.

The *ACRL Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services* may also be called the *ACRL Standards for Extended Campus Library Services* before they are accepted by ACRL as standards. The *ACRL Guide to Policies & Procedures* (1989) states that ACRL will have only three standards, one each for university, college, and two-year college libraries. They have no such limit on issuing guidelines. ACRL does treat both guidelines and standards with the same serious commitment and endorsement.

In the meantime, the ECLS guidelines will serve the profession well. They continue to become stronger and more prescriptive with each revision, yet they also retain the necessary flexibility.

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