"But You're Not Real Faculty!": The Issue of Librarian Image on the College Campus

Jennifer A. Bartlett
University of Kentucky, jen.bartlett@uky.edu

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“BUT YOU’RE NOT REAL FACULTY!”

The Issue of Librarian Image on the College Campus

Kickin’ It Up a Notch: Improving Our Professional Image

2011 Joint Spring Conference
AN IMAGE PROBLEM?

Integral partners in the educational process?

Glorified clerks?
THE FACULTY MODEL MOVEMENT

- Literature supporting this begins during the 1930s, critical mass reached in the late 1940s
- Push towards higher status for librarians in academe
- Based on librarians’ image of themselves as educators
- Debate continues now
Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944

- Post-WWII
- Servicemen returning to college under the G.I. Bill
- Growth in collections, programs, and academic support - librarians’ roles became more complex
1973: “The Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians”

“Librarians perform a teaching and research role inasmuch as they instruct students formally and informally and advise and assist faculty in their scholarly pursuits. Librarians are also themselves involved in the research function; many conduct research in their own professional interests and in the discharge of their duties.”
WHAT IS FACULTY STATUS?

- Faculty ranks (titles)
- Eligibility for tenure
- Continuing appointments
- Equivalent pay scales and vacation time
- Participation in faculty governance
- Release time for research/sabbaticals
- Academic freedom
- Access to travel and research funding
“Academic Status for Librarians in ARL Libraries”

Of 99 responding libraries:
- 35 = faculty eligible for tenure
- 31 = academic status with continuing appointments
- 9 = faculty status with continuing appointments
- 23 = “other”
AAUP SPECIAL COMMITTEE

- Formed in 2009 to examine the current status of academic librarians
- Purpose: to “survey the treatment of college and university librarians, focusing particularly on the practices of institutions that grant faculty status to librarians”

Joint Spring Conference - 15 April 2011
PROS

- Increased job security
- Participation in academic affairs
- Influence in forming curriculum
- Participation in the academic life of the college or university
- Others?
CONS

- Opportunity cost - time and effort required to pursue research and service takes away from “primary responsibilities”
- 12-month as opposed to 9-month appointments
- Others?
“Electronic Libraries Can’t Be Academic”

- No academic affiliation
- No physical library building
- No academic librarians/faculty
- No personal interaction with students
- No community
LIBRARY VS. QUESTIA

- Closes nightly
- Late fees, books checked out for weeks
- Need change for the copier
- Not allowed to mark book pages
- Keeping track of your sources is a nightmare

- Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Books never checked out and no overdue fees
- Print pages for free
- Go ahead, highlight and scribble on our pages
- Automatically records sources used and creates bibliography
DREXEL LIBRARY LEARNING TERRACE

- Located in a residence hall
- No books or computers
- Space for tutors, faculty consults, etc.
- No library staff
TEACHING FACULTY ATTITUDES

- Uncertainty about what librarians do
- Scholars vs. technicians
  - The Doctorate
- Parochial attitudes
  - Collection development decisions
- “I know how to use the library”
- Lingering stereotypes
  - Nitpicky
  - Inflexible
  - Uninformed
A BETTER PARTNERSHIP

- Clear communication about not only our resources, but what we do
- Promotion of information literacy integrated into courses and the curriculum
- Full participation on campus-wide committees
- Staying vocal and visible outside the library and off-campus
What do you feel is the future of librarians having faculty status?
If you have faculty status, do you feel it gives you more job security?
What is the faculty’s perception of your professional status and what you do?
Do you feel the opportunity cost of having service and research obligations?
Do you think that the increasing emphasis on electronic access is making librarians irrelevant?
THANK YOU!

Jennifer Bartlett
University of Kentucky Libraries
jen.bartlett@uky.edu